

# SNAPS

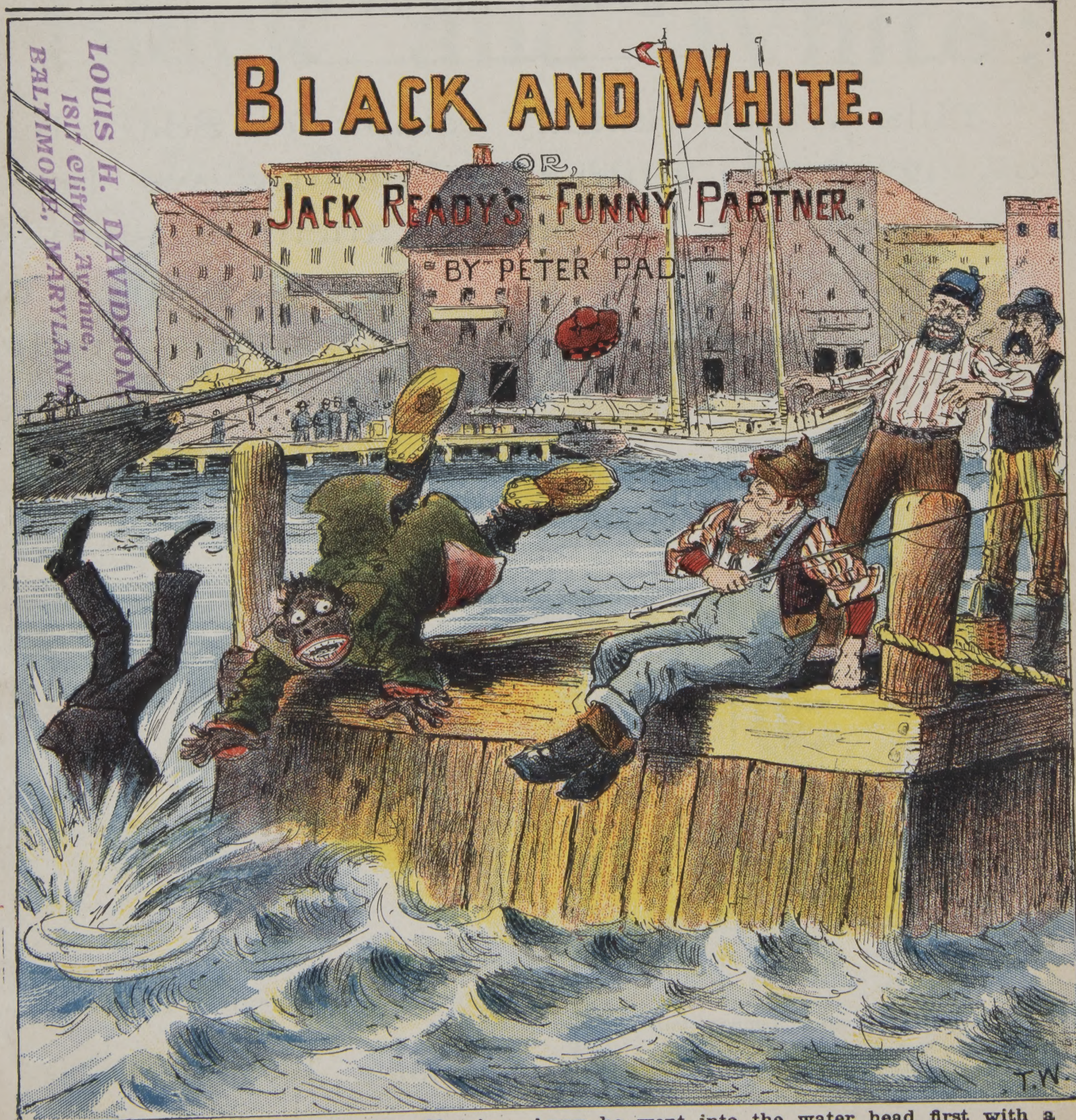
A COMIC WEEKLY OF COMIC STORIES BY COMIC AUTHORS.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 44.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 8, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.



Gloon gave a howl as he felt himself going.—Away he went into the water head first with a splash and a plunge. Jack went down at the same time, and the fisherman on the dock let off a laugh that resounded over the water.



# A Good Watch for One Dollar

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FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,

24 Union Square, New York.



# ❖ SNAPS ❖

A Comic Weekly of Comic Stories by Comic Authors.

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No. 44.

NEW YORK, August 8, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

## Black and White ;

OR,

### Jack Ready's Funny Partner.

LOUIS H. DAVIDSON,  
1817 Clifton Avenue,  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

By PETER PAD.

#### CHAPTER I.

Jack Ready was a jolly young chap, full of fun and with no end of schemes for practical jokes at the tips of his fingers, but a rolling stone.

It was into a thing to-day and out of it to-morrow, in one place one day and in another the next and sometimes not so long as that.

Now and then he was bounced, occasionally he skipped out for fear he would be on account of his propensity for fun-making and sometimes he just skipped out because he was tired of the place and wanted to see something else.

He was about eighteen, as far as he knew, but he could not tell much about himself and did not even know for sure that his name was Jack Ready, although it was a convenient one and good enough for lack of better.

He had been left at the doorstep of a farmer named Skinner, when a young child, and had been brought up by him and his wife, who had no children and made him do the work for a whole family and said nothing about the question of pay and did not even give him decent clothes nor proper food.

When Jack was about eighteen, he kicked and the Skinners threatened to take him to the poorhouse and even took him by the ears and led him off, intending to scare him, but Jack upset them both, skipped out and began life on his own account as a rolling stone.

He traveled from town to town doing this, that and the other thing and finally picked up a little coon who was a wanderer like himself and upon whom he could work all sorts of jokes, being a past master in that sort of business.

The little nig didn't know much more about himself than Jack did, and called himself Gloon and nothing else, and whether it was his first or his last name or a combination of both, there was no telling.

Well, Jack and Gloon had lots of adventures and lots of fun and the little nig got to liking Jack first-rate and stuck to him like cobbler's wax to a school teacher's breeches.

They got in with a troupe of wandering negro minstrels, they did this thing and that, but all the time they kept on the roll and Jack played tricks on Gloon as well as on other folks.

One day, however, Gloon got mad, told Jack he was no good and that he never wanted to see him again, and was going to shake him, and started off through the town, as mad as a hornet and with a face as black as a thunder cloud.

He could not shake Jack, though, no matter how much he tried, and he tramped right through the town and out beyond it, and still the jolly fellow was at his side.

"You wouldn't shake me, would you, cooney?" asked Jack, at length, giving Gloon a poke in the ribs.

"G'way, chile, don' tickle me," muttered the little nig, beginning to laugh.

"After we've had so many snaps together, too," continued Jack.

"Fo' Gawge, yo' am de worses' boy I eber seed fo' makin' fun, Marse Jack," he at length managed to say.

"Then you wouldn't like to go on without me, would you?" asked Jack with mock gravity.

"No, sah; but wha' make yo' pull dat big toof out o' my mouf? Couldn' yo' let 'im done stay in when it took so much trouble to get him out?"

Then Jack did a laughing act on his own account, and explained all about that bogus tooth.

"Den he didn' come out of my mouf at all?"

"Nixey."

"An' he done done all that pullin' and haulin' fo' nuffin'?"

"Oh, he pulled out the bad tooth fast enough and at the first go, but the rest of the funny business was all put on."

"An' den de boss done bounce me f'om de shop?"

"Oh, he had nothing to do with that," said Jack, soberly.

The coon thought the thing over for a little, and then began to laugh, saying at last:

"Well, Marse Jack, I go 'long o' youse, 'cause I done like yer fus' rate, on'y don' yo' play no mo' rackets on dis yer chile."

"Oh, no," said Jack, with all the seriousness in the world, though he held on to a mental reservation which said:

"Oh, no, my boy, not till I get a good fat chance, I won't."

However, peace was restored, and our two young tramps hoofed it merrily along the snowy road and cast care to the winds.

Early in the afternoon they entered a place which had more bustle and snap to it than any town they had yet struck.

It was a sort of off-shoot to the great city just beyond, and the influence of the latter could easily be felt.

Jack, although he had lived in the country always, nevertheless felt at home here, and he longed more than ever to reach the city.

While strolling along, with no particular object in view, Jack was attracted by the following sign:

HANFORD'S GREAT MUSEUM.  
TEN THOUSAND RARE CURIOSITIES.  
'LIVING HUMAN FREAKS.

Fat Women, Tattooed Men, Leopard Boys, Wild Australians,  
Genuine Indian Chiefs.

REAL CIRCASSIAN GIRLS, LOVELY LITTLE PAPPOOSES.  
DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE HOURLY.  
All for One Dime.



"I say, Gloom, how would you like to go into the show business once more?" asked Jack, halting in front of the gaudily-painted establishment run by the great Hanford.

"Make a nigger ministah of myse'f once mo', Marse Jack?" inquired the coon, his mouth expanding at the giddy posters.

"Something of that sort, or you might exhibit yourself as the fat boy from Alabama."

"Guess not, jes' yet, Marse Jack," laughed Gloom, as he put both hands between himself and the waistband of his trousers, leaving still plenty of room to spare. "Reckon I mus' fill dis up a little afo' I kin call myse'f dat."

"Well, then, go as the living skeleton."

"What am a skilligan, Marse Jack? Am it good fo' eat?"

"No, it's a fellow so thin that he can go to sleep on a clothesline, fall through a crack in the floor, hide in a gaspipe, or pass himself for a billiard cue."

"Reckon I'se too fat fo' dat, Marse Jack, do' I isn't big enuff fo' de fat boy from Alabam' yet."

"Tickets, gents," yelled a fellow from a little painted box with a hole in it. "Step right in and see this great show, all for a dime. Dramatic performance on the commodious stage about to begin."

"I say, we're in the business," said Jack, stepping up to the box. "Can't you pass us in?"

"Profesh?" asked the man in the box.

"Bet yer life."

"What line?"

"Burnt cork."

"Guess the moke don't use much of that."

"No, he's a real bona-fide coon, the celebrated big-mouth jubilee singer from Alabama, funniest banjo player in the world."

"Where's your troupe?"

"Gone up. The other fellows' shoes weren't as good as ours, and the walking was bad."

"What's the show?"

"Lovell's Minstrels."

"Charlie Lovell, Lewis, Gleason and that lot?"

"Just the same."

"Step inside; you'll find the boss in his office."

"Here's another job for us, cooney," said Jack, "and we must make the best of it."

Mr. Hanford's private office was close by, and when the boys entered they found the manager sitting at a small table strewn with papers, looking over a lot of letters.

Pictures of footlight favorites adorned the walls, colored posters were hung everywhere, and what between piles of papers, musty curiosities out of repair, bits of wardrobe, dust and rubbish, there seemed to be no place to sit down.

"What can I do for you?" asked Mr. Hanford, looking up.

"We're minstrels out of a job and looking for another, but we can do anything," answered Jack.

Just then Hanford got on to that comical coon and laughed outright.

"Does the dizzy blonde travel in your combination?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; he's my side partner."

"What can he do?"

"Anything."

"And you?"

"Everything."

"You are modesty itself, my boy."

"That's what tells in this country."

"Can you sing a song made up on the spur of the moment? My man that used to do that is sick, and I've got to fill his place somehow."

This was a stumper, but the Rolling Stone had never been blocked yet, and he wasn't going to begin now.

"Got a banjo?" he said quickly.

Hanford hauled one out from under his desk and handed it over to Jack.

Our hero sat down on a pile of papers laid over a chair and began to strike a few chords, having learned to play passably well while with Lovell, all the while setting his wits to work.

"What'll it be?" he finally asked.

"Oh, anything. Something in the natural course of events," said Hanford, after a pause.

"That's it," said Jack, quickly, "and now I'll let her go."

Then, playing an easy, jingling accompaniment, he rattled off the following:

"A gentleman meets his best girl on the street,

In the natural course of events.

And then and there asks her to have a treat,

In the natural course of events.

Her appetite's twice the size of his pocket,

In the grub-eating line, oh, how she does sock it,

And away goes his money, as high as a rocket,

In the natural course of events.

"That isn't bad; more," laughed Hanford.

"Dat am fus' rate," muttered Gloom, "but yo' donno dat boy Jack ef yo' t'ink he's gwine to stop at de fus' verse."

"Give us another one, then," said Hanford, getting interested.

"Same as before?" asked Jack, doing some tall thinking.

"As you were, as the photo artists say," assented Hanford.

"Let her boil!" cried Jack, and then with a short prelude he started off on his second lap:

"Now, boys, do not think you are great on the mash,

In the natural course of events.

Or some day your pride will take a big crash,

In the natural course of events.

You may go once too often when fond beauty bids,

And plunge into trouble up to your eyelids,

By wedding a widow with seventeen kids,

In the natural course of events.

"Any more of the same kind?" asked Hanford, smiling.

"Can you stand it?"

"Yes, if you can."

"All right—let her simmer."

And Jack twanged away, and got off the third agony:

"The doctors and druggists are pretty good friends,

In the natural course of events.

And with the undertakers they keep up both ends,

In the natural course of events.

But if all three were banished beyond the great sea,

With landlords, lawyers, plumbers, I know you'll agree,

That a very fine world this earth would soon be,

In the natural course of events.

"That'll do first rate," said Hanford. "You're engaged for a week."

"In the natural course of events," sang Jack.

"I'll give you a tip," said Hanford. "Some of your impromptu songs may be written up beforehand, you know, and then when you see anything funny in the house you can hit it off with a line or two."

"I catch on," answered Jack, "but what are you going to do with the coon?"

"I don't know. We ain' trunning a minstrel show this week."

"Can't you find something for him?"

"Well, I might make a wild man of the woods out of him, stick him in a cage and let him holler. Can you eat raw beef, cooney?" he added, turning to Gloom.

"Kin I eat shavings?" laughed Gloom. "Why, boss, I'se so hungry I could chew up de postahs on de walls fo' de paste."

Hanford laughed, and then said to Jack:

"We'll fix him up in a tiger skin and put him in one of the cages with a lot of chains, and put up a danger sign. I used to hire a nigger to do that sort of business, and he did first rate till he took cold one day and died on my hands."

"Anything, so long as it's a job," said Jack. "We're a couple of free and easy boys who do anything for fun."

Jack made his first appearance that afternoon, and created a very good impression.

He had plenty of ready wit, and was quick to see the fun of everything, as well as a natural gift of rhyming, so that he could turn the queer people and things he saw into verse with great readiness.

At the same time that Jack was getting off his songs in the amusement hall, Gloom was posing as a "wild man of the forest, half human, half ape, endowed with enormous strength, and of a most ferocious disposition," as the lecturer said.

Clad in a red velvet garment which did not reach high enough for a shirt nor low enough for a pair of drawers, with a big ox chain around his ankles and a huge club in his hands, that young coon roamed up and down inside a big cage, growled and made faces and jabbered like an ape, being given a lesson or two by Jack before making his debut.

An hour or two of this sort of business was pretty tiresome work, and Gloom was sitting down on a bundle of straw with his back against the bars, eating a piece of pie on the sly, when along came a woman with three or four children on a tour of investigation.

One of the youngsters was greatly interested in Gloom, and creeping up behind him, rammed a pin in the fleshy part of his thigh.

The supposed wild man jumped up, with a piece of pie in one hand—something quite too civilized for the untamed denizen of the forest to eat—and shaking the other at the mischievous youth, cried out, in familiar accents:

"G'way fom yer, chile! Ef I cotch yo' 'ticken' pins in me again, I breaks yo' jaw berry sudden, dat wha' I do, I tol' yo'."

The sensation caused by hearing the wild man of the woods suddenly break out in this style can be better imagined than described.



## CHAPTER II.

Imagine a supposed ferocious cannibal, what-is-it, gorilla and general nondescript suddenly turning out to be nothing more extraordinary than a common, every-day coon!

The disgust of the sightseers in Hanford's Museum may readily be imagined.

"It's a regular swindle," growled a man from the country. "I knowed it was just a common nigger all the time."

"We ought to have our money back," piped up an elderly female of the genus old maid. "It's just an imposition, that's what it is."

"Who done stick dat yer pin in me?" demanded Gloom, excitedly, shaking his fist at the gang.

"Get on to the moke!" cried a small boy, one of the unterrified; "pretty wild man of de woods he is."

"Yo' specs I'se gwine to sit yer in der straw an' cotch cold, an' holler, an' eat raw beef, an' make faces fo' free dollahs a week an' den hab folkses shovin' pins inter me besides?" asked the indignant nig. "No, sah, not ef de cote knows hisself."

"It's a swindle."

"I want my money back."

"Lord, what fun!"

"G'way, dar, white trash."

Everybody was speaking at once, and there was the liveliest kind of a time around that wild man's cage in two seconds.

Some were mad, some thought it a jolly lark, others were indignant, many were puzzled, but Gloom took the prize for red-hot wrath.

If he could have gotten out of his cage he would have tried to lick the whole crowd, regardless of the fact that he was but one small coon and they were many and strong.

Jack quickly saw what the trouble was, and, with Hanford and a couple of attendants, ran up to the cage and cleared away the crowd.

"He's very dangerous at present, ladies and gentlemen," cried Jack, assuming the tone and manner of a side-show blower, "and, strange as it may seem, is gifted at these times with the power of speech, though he attaches no meaning to the words he uses. Howl and make faces, you blessed idiot!" he added, in a whisper to Gloom.

But that little moke was mad, and continued to threaten to thrash the whole crowd in choice English, notwithstanding Jack's hints and winks.

"I won't stan' it no mo', Marse Jack," he protested. "I frow up de hull job fus', so dat settles it."

The crowd laughed and jeered, and Hanford, to divert them from the scene, cried in a loud tone:

"This way, ladies and gents. The stage performance is about to begin. Seats all free, first come, first served."

Then somebody entered the wild man's cage and quieted him with a stuffed club, while others swept the crowd toward the amusement hall, so that in a few moments the place was vacated.

"You young donkey, you've spoiled the whole snap," growled Jack, when the crowd had gone. "You ought to get six months."

It was a rare thing for our hero to lose his temper, for he was generally as jolly as young fellows are made.

"Don' car' if I hab, Marse Jack," muttered Gloom, "but I neber could stan' habin' pins stuck inter me, an' ef dere's an'fing else to do, I'll do it, but I'se done tired ob bein' a wil' man, an' I won' do it no mo'."

Jack had to laugh in spite of himself when he came to think of the comical side of the affair, and that put Gloom into good nature again, though he declared that he had had enough of the what-is-it business.

He was let out of his cage and smuggled off to his dressing-room, where he resumed his own clothes and helped Jack to dress for his own appearance in the stage entertainment.

Hanford was mad at first at the exposure of the wild man fake, but he was compelled to laugh when Jack gave his version of the affair, and finally agreed to find something else for the little moke to do.

That evening Gloom gave a banjo solo on the stage, and later on he and Jack appeared in their musical act as performed with Lovell's Minstrels, both being well received.

Jack studied up some new "impromptu" business, changing his gags as his audiences changed, so that the songs appeared to be made up on the spur of the moment, although most of them were not.

The wild man's cage was kept covered up with canvas until something could be found to put in it, for the snap had become too widely known to make the imposition go down a second time.

However, the two friends did very well on the stage, but as they could not be there all the time, and as Hanford did not believe in any of his employes being idle, he soon began to look around for something else for them to do.

So he set Jack to beating the cymbals and Gloom to pounding the big drum in the band that played in the front second story

windows three or four times an afternoon and twice in the evening.

The boys found a place to board close to the museum, and as they were paid every night for their day's work, and as this was more than enough to pay their board and lodgings, things began to look prosperous with them.

They were at the museum from ten in the morning until nearly midnight, with a half an hour each for dinner and supper, and were consequently glad to turn in and fall right off to sleep the moment they got home.

They finished out the week, and expected to have Sunday for a day of rest, but here they were mistaken.

Hanford ran a panorama of Egypt and the Holy Land on Sunday afternoons, and another illustrating Paradise Lost in the evening, and Jack and Gloom had to play in the band as well as help the fellows with the canvas.

Then Jack had to sing in a sacred concert given between the afternoon and evening performances, so that, after all, the only time he had to himself on Sunday was up to one o'clock, as at that time he had to report for duty.

However, Hanford re-engaged both him and Gloom for the whole of the week, and he began to feel as though his rolling days were over.

Early in the week the man who introduced the living curiosities, or "freaks," was taken sick, and Jack was put to work as a lecturer in the main hall, having to tell his little story every hour or two in addition to his other duties.

"They'll have me running the whole show alone before long," thought he. "This working between meals is not good for the constitution. I must strike a softer job."

One day a new attraction appeared at the museum in the shape of a monstrous fat boy.

Jack was given a remarkable story to tell in regard to the phenomenon, and prepared to do his level best in the world of fiction.

The freak was a pretty big fellow, sure enough, but Jack took a quiet tumble in regard to his bigness, and resolved to have a little racket.

When the time came to exhibit the living curiosities, Master Jack jumped upon the platform and said:

"Fellow-citizens, allow me to introduce one of the wonders of the earth, Master Paddy Little, the giant boy of the Southeast."

"This young gentleman weighs nine hundred pounds and is still growing, thus showing the effects of anti-fat upon the human system."

"He was born at an early period of his existence in Wayback, Slowgo county, Ireland, his mother being French and his father a Turk, which will account for his ruddy complexion."

"At birth, this midget weighed only two pounds, but at the age of six he had seen that two ciphers better and kicked the beam at two hundred, with a good chance to fill his hand."

"At eleven he could count on four of a kind and an odd half century, going under the string a length ahead of all competitors at four hundred and fifty and beating all records."

"From that time on he began to diet, so as to reduce his weight, and succeeded so well that now, at the age of sixteen, he weighs, or says he does, only a trifling one hundred pounds short of half a ton."

"If anybody doubts this, we will weigh our young friend, but as our scales can only accommodate two hundred pounds at a time, we will have to weigh Master Little in sections, beginning with his cheek, which is the biggest I ever saw."

"Rise up, Paddy, and let the ladies and gents see your fairy-like proportions, and judge of the good affects of a vigorous diet."

This was not the speech that Jack had been instructed to get off, and Hanford, who was in the rear of the crowd, was looking as black as Gloom himself.

The speech tickled the spectators, however, and as Paddy arose to his feet and waddled forward a few steps, they looked on with amazement.

"Our fat woman is suffering from a sprained neck," continued Jack, "or she would join in the mazy dance with our friend Paddy, in order to illustrate to you the lightness of foot possessed by these giants, it being a mistaken idea that fat persons are always clumsy."

"Now, then, Paddy, my boy, you can sit down, and we will proceed to cut you up so that you may be weighed."

Then that joker, in the presence of the whole crowd, but unseen by Paddy himself, put an overgrown pin, bent for convenience, on the chair seat.

"To show you that fat people are indifferent to pain, I will now perform a little experiment," continued Jack, as Paddy backed slowly toward the chair, "and proceed to drive this pin into our friend's flesh."

He then produced a big pin, and rushed at Paddy with the evident intention of jabbing it into his arm.

The fat boy did not seem to relish this, for he sprang backward and sat down suddenly.

He did not jump up again, as everyone supposed he would, upon sitting upon that crooked pin.



The result that followed was quite as extraordinary, however, as it was unexpected.

There was a loud, hissing sound in the rear, and then Paddy began to fall away with such rapidity that in a few seconds his clothes hung on him like a horse blanket on a bean pole.

In fact, the fat boy was no fatter than Jack, the mountain of flesh being simply a rubber suit blown up to an extraordinary size, and then fitted with a suit of clothes.

Jack's pin had penetrated the extended rubber, and the fat boy's wind gave out in consequence.

The poor fellow knew that something had happened when he began to shrivel up so suddenly, although he had not felt anything.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake! Somefin' has done busted!" exclaimed the Irish giant in regular darky dialect.

Then he reached up his hands, pulled off his head, threw it on the platform and made a break.

The head was only a big mask, and the shiny black face and kinky locks of little Gloon now appeared upon the shrunken shoulders of the fat boy, Paddy Little.

"Great snakes! It's the wild man in a new fake!" yelled a man who had seen Gloon's former mishap.

"Another swindle!" cried somebody. "Let's go for the nigger!"

Poor Gloon, encumbered with his rubber suit and his big clothes, made about as good time as a wooden-legged man bereft of his pegs.

He started to run, but tripped himself up and fell on his face, driving more wind out of his rubber bag with a loud hiss.

Some of the gang laughed, some got mad, some wanted to lick anybody who did not object, and others wanted the coon blown up again so that they could use him for a foot-ball.

Hanford pushed through the crowd, jumped on the platform and tried to explain, but the crowd would not have it.

Meanwhile Jack had got a knife, ripped open his dusky friend's outer shell, so to speak, and liberated him.

"Dat am de las' time I do de fat boy business," growled Gloon, giving the head he had worn a savage kick.

Then he started to follow Jack, that worthy having bolted, but here he missed connection.

Hanford caught him in the act, and proceeded to warm his jacket for him in the most approved style.

If Gloon had been the dustiest carpet ever seen, the beating he then received would have knocked every bit of dust out of him.

He was mauled and pounded and cuffed till he didn't know which end of him was uppermost.

"Fo' goodness' sakes sabe me, Marse Jack!" he howled.

Jack turned and saw the sorrowful plight his poor friend was in.

Though he might put up a job on the little coon, he did not want to see him killed by any means.

"Let up on that, you snoozer," he yelled, jumping on the platform.

Hanford gave Gloon an additional kick, however, and at that Jack went for him.

He first pasted him in the lip, and then proceeded to tap the end of his nose.

Having given Gloon a chance to escape, he then skipped out himself, but the freaks did not intend to let the boss off so easily.

They all had grievances against him, and they proceeded to settle them forthwith.

The tattooed man punched his head, the leopard boy kicked him in the shins, the Kickapoo Indian chief yanked off his wig and thrashed him with it, the living skeleton knocked him down and the fat woman sat on him.

That settled the business, for the large lady, as she styled herself, weighed three hundred pounds by actual count, and when she sat down she was no feather-weight.

"Get up!" gasped Hanford.

"Will you increase my salary?"

"Anything."

"And mine?" demanded the living skeleton, who had averaged things up by marrying the fat woman.

"Yes, yes, let me up."

"And mine?" yelled all the other curiosities in chorus.

If Hanford had not promised he would have been crushed as flat as a sheet of paper in about ten seconds.

He gasped out an acquiescence, and then the three-hundred pound sylph let up on him and allowed him to regain his feet.

It took a dozen long breaths before he could fill his lungs to their regular capacity, while his face looked as if he had dived into an ash-barrel.

The crowd thought it was great fun and cheered the freaks; but Hanford did not see it, and limped away as mad a man as any in town.

Meanwhile, Jack and Gloon had secured their belongings and had given the museum the grand shake.

"No more of that sort in mine," remarked Jack, as he trudged along with Gloon just behind.

The coon did not say anything, and he felt in anything but a cheerful mood.

He had been made the victim of a practical joke once more, and his dignity had been insulted.

More than that, he had been licked for nothing, and that was something he could not stand.

The two tramps passed through the town, and soon left the busier streets behind them.

On the very outskirts, looking as if it had been stranded, was a little shop where all sorts of things were sold.

It was not in town, nor was it in the country, but somewhere between the two, and was the forlornest little place you could imagine.

It looked as if it had started off to become a big store and had forgotten to grow, or else the town had not caught up to it and the city had left it behind.

It was a little one-story affair, with one small show window where all sorts of things were exhibited, and a glass door with a bell over it that clanged and rattled like mad when anyone came in.

Jack stopped in front of the window and looked at the assortment within.

There were toys, pop-corn, five-year-old almanacs, pig's feet, brushes and combs, bread, potatoes, perfumery, valentines, sun-bonnets, needles and thread, marbles, sticks of candy, a hoopskirt, some choice sentimental ballads, a clothesline, and a solitary pack of fire-crackers.

"Did you ever see such a collection?" laughed Jack. "Looks as if they had a customer once a year, and he had forgotten to come around this year."

Jack walked into the store and found the presiding genius as queer as the place itself and its stock.

She was a little, dried-up old maid, with a row of yellow curls on each side of her forehead, a sorry-looking lace cap adorned with faded ribbons perched on her head, and wearing a dress that Noah's wife might have thrown out of the ark as unfit for wear.

"Give me that pack of fire-crackers," said Jack, having no earthly use for them, but buying them just because it was an odd thing to do.

"Six cents," piped the little old maid, reaching into the window, and fishing out the young poppers, after knocking down a monkey on a stick, a paper of pins, and a barley sugar horse in the attempt.

Jack forked over his six pennies, received the crackers and a smirk from the boss of the shop and walked out, the bell over the door giving a noisy warning of that fact.

"Wha' yo' do wif de powdah crackahs, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon, breaking the silence after a walk of half a mile.

"Set 'em off under you and make you say something," laughed Jack. "They say that a sudden noise will restore speech to the dumb sometimes."

"Hain't said nuffin' kase I had nuffin' to say," growled Gloon. "Don' yo' set dem crackahs off neah me, sah, kase I've had enuff ob yo' foolin'."

"I thought I'd have some fun on my own account, or at least make a noise," said Jack, "for it's been a regular funeral ever since we left town."

"Don' car' ef it hab, yo' got no call to 'buse me like yo' did, an' I won' stan' it no mo'!"

"Then roll over to it," said Jack, tramping on.

After walking a couple of miles along a country road, the city being observed in the distance, they came to a broken-down wagon lying at the side of the road.

It was a dilapidated affair at best, but one of the wheels had come off and broken besides, and it had evidently only just been abandoned.

In fact, it was not long before making a turn in the road, the boys came upon an old darky riding on an older mule, rigged up in an antediluvian harness, riding along the road.

The old man had on dilapidated garments, wore big horn-rimmed spectacles, and carried a big whip, with which he belabored that mule's flanks in order to get him to go faster than a crawl.

"Good-morning, uncle," said Jack, coming up. "What's the trouble?"

"Mornin', chillen, mornin'—get up, yo' lazy critter," said the old darky, addressing both the boys and the mule. "Wagon broke down jes' back yer a piece, an' I done gwine aftah a wheel I'se got to hum."

"What makes you take the harness?"

"Specs I leabe dat wallyble harness fo' de fólks to steal, honey? No, sah, I tote dat along. Wish I cud take de wagon, too, fo' I reckon somebody 'teal dat, too, afo' I gits back. G'long dar, mule."

The mule put on a spurt and dashed past the boys, shaking his old bones and his rope, chain, wood and leather trappings till they sounded like a lot of castanets.

"I think I know what'll start that mule up," laughed Jack, producing the fire-crackers he had bought. "That was a good idea of mine."

"Wha' yo' do wif dem, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon, getting interested.

"Stick 'em on to that mule's tail."



"Dat am a boss ideah, Marse Jack," chuckled the coon, now in the best of humor.

The mule was now plodding along easily, notwithstanding the belting he was getting, and the boys quickly caught up to him.

Then, while Gloom held on to his tail on one side, Jack secured the crackers to it on the other and made them fast.

Jack then lighted a match, set fire to the fuse uniting the crackers, and waited for the fun to begin.

### CHAPTER III.

The aged ducky continued to pound away at that mule with the whip in order to expedite his movements.

"G'long, yo' Injun!" he growled. "Don' yo' 'specs I want'er git home some time dis ebenin'?"

Then he whacked away once more with a determination to make that mule go whether he liked it or not.

Meanwhile something was going on in the rear which the aged African was not aware of.

There was a sputtering and a sissing and a gradual increase of the temperature which did not altogether suit his muleship.

The pack of fire-crackers lighted by Jack was beginning to make itself prominent.

"Siss-ss-ft—bang!"

At last the racket began, and in dead earnest.

That pack of crackers had got right down to work in the liveliest sort of fashion, and the weather had greatly moderated in the region of that mule's rear apartments.

The poor beast didn't propose to stand that sort of thing more than a minute, and he began to let fly with his posterior battering-rams in a very active fashion.

However, that did not seem to do any good, for the crackers snapped, cracked, sputtered and sissed the same as before.

It took but little time after that to induce him to vacate the premises.

He pulled up stakes and made tracks about as quickly as he had gotten over the road, even in his youthful days.

The poor old coon was nearly thrown off his back, but he managed to stick, and then the fun began for both him and the mule.

"Whoa dar, Injun!" he managed to gasp, for the wind was nearly shaken out of him.

He grabbed the mule around the neck with both arms as though he meant to choke the poor brute, dug both heels into his sides and held on for dear life.

He heard the fusillade in the rear, but didn't know what it meant for the life of him.

"Hol' on dere, don't shoot!" he yelled, as he went bumping and jolting along.

Crack, bang, ft—bang!

The little red-coated Chinese toys kept up their end of the racket in commendable style, and the mule, not to be beaten, put in his best paces.

Dust flying, sparks jumping, crackers bursting, mule's feet thumping on the road, old coon yelling and boys laughing.

Things altogether were pretty lively for that quiet place, and if there had only been a crowd to see, what fun they would have had.

The aged moke lost his hat and big spectacles, and the wind blew through his fluttering coat-tails without the slightest regard to his dignity.

"Hi, dere, stop o' dat, stan' still," grunted the old fellow, hanging on to that mule's neck as to his last hope. "Wha' got inter yo' anyhow, h'm?"

But that mule was not answering perplexing questions at that hour of the day.

Instead of that he was doing his level best to escape from the wrath that was.

As for Jack and Gloom, they enjoyed the sport as only two fun-loving boys can enjoy a first-class snap.

"Look at that trotter cover the ground," roared Jack. "He's bound to take the cup."

"Gorry, ef dat ol' daddy eber let go, he make a hole in de road big enuff to bury um," laughed Gloom.

"Don't the dust fly, though? That mule's a stepper."

"Dey am jes' a hummin', I tol' yer. Bet he don't stop fo' five mile."

"Oh, he's a daisy!"

Then Jack cackled, and the small moke yelled, and finally rolled over and over on the ground till you would have thought he had a fit.

The old ducky and his mule were soon out of sight in the distance, and then Jack yanked Gloom upon his feet and said:

"Come along, my young black and tan; we've got to stir our pegs."

"Clar' to goodness, Marse Jack, dat am de funnies' fing I eber seed in all my bo'n days."

All his anger toward Jack had evaporated, and he forgot all about the snap the Rolling Stone had so lately played on him in his enjoyment of the old ducky's struggles.

"Yes, it does kind o' scoop the doughnut," observed Jack; "but we've got a pretty long road before us, and we'd better lose no time in putting it behind us, for we don't want to have night come and catch us nowhere."

"Deed we don', Marse Jack, fo' dat am a bad place to sleep."

However, they pegged along, and at night were a little better than nowhere, having come upon a small house all alone by itself, two or three miles from anywhere, where lived an old man, his wife and two sons.

Here our two tramps resolved to stay all night, and the old man gave them a most cordial welcome and bade them make the best of all the house afforded.

Jack told his adventures and sang several songs, and Gloom made lots of fun with his comical ways, and was voted quite a trump.

During the evening Jack noticed the old man and his wife exchanging whispers and sly glances at their guests, the meaning of which he could not fathom.

At last, when it was quite late and Jack felt like going to bed, Gloom having long since fallen asleep in a corner by the fire, the old man said:

"I s'pose you'd like to go to bed sometime, wouldn't you?"

"Now is as good a time as any," returned Jack, "for, to tell the truth, I am dead tuckered out."

"You wouldn't mind sleeping with some one else, I don't suppose?" continued the old fellow, squirming around on his seat as though he had a whole nest of Job's comforters behind him.

"Oh, no, the coon and I can bunk in together," laughed Jack. "It's cold weather now, and so I don't mind it."

"H'm! I didn't mean that," said the father of the flock, shifting his chew of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other.

Jack began to take a quiet drop, but he said nothing.

"It's just here," said the old woman, coming to her husband's rescue. "We ain't got but two beds, and we has one and the boys has t'other."

"And if you wouldn't mind turnin' in with the boys fur to-night we'll give ye another comfortable."

"They're small boys, you know, and the bed is putty big."

"Only I don't know whether they'd like to sleep with a nigger, and so——"

"I ain't going to sleep with a nig," spoke up the eldest boy, a young fellow of Jack's age.

"Put the moke by the fire," chimed in the younger son, a boy of about fourteen.

"Now, boys, that colored boy is just as clean——"

"If the white boy can sleep with him I guess——"

"Tell you I won't, so there, and if——"

"He can sleep in front of the fire just as well——"

"Who's bossing this——"

"Don't you talk to me——"

"Oh, get out."

Everybody was talking at once, and for a few moments it was Bedlam let loose in that little house.

"We can both of us sleep by the fire," said Jack, when he found a chance to get in a word, "and let you have your beds to yourself."

The noise had awakened Gloom, and he sat rubbing his eyes and blinking like an owl that has sat up too late.

"Wha' de mattah, Marse Jack?" asked he, turning to his companion.

Jack explained, and then the old woman piped up again, and said: "I ain't goin' to have no fire kept all night in this house. Do you want to burn the place down? Guess you four can sleep in one bed. If one of you falls out you can lie crossways at the foot."

"I won't sleep with a nigger," yelled the eldest son.

"You'll sleep where I tell ye," cried the old woman, fetching the refractory youth a whack on the jaws that loosened his back teeth.

Jack leaned over and whispered a few words in the young fellow's ear.

"All right, ma'am," he said sullenly.

The old couple's room was back of the one where they had been sitting, while that of the boys was upstairs in the loft, a room taking in the whole extent of the house, but unplastered and decidedly draughty.

The bed stood in the middle of the room, and was a good average size for one person, not quite big enough for two, a tight fit for three and no measure at all for any more than that.

"The last in bed puts out the light," said Jack as he and the boys were undressing.

Then there was a scramble, and those boys' duds came off quicker than they had ever done before.

"Golly, I gits de middle ob de bed!" cried Gloom, who had no rooted antipathy against sleeping with a white boy, as he made a dash for the bed.

He landed plump in the middle of it, turned down the clothes, and snuggled under them in a jiffy.



Jack and the younger brother were next, and took the right and left sides respectively, leaving the elder brother out.

"What am I going to do?" he asked.

"Sleep at the foot, Bob," said Ben, the younger brother.

"Won't."

"Stop kicking me!" cried Jack, suddenly.

"Who is?" cried Ben.

"You," and Jack let fly with his foot.

"I say I ain't!" and Ben returned the compliment.

"You are so," and then both boys got to kicking.

"Hol' on dar. Youse kickin' me ebery time," yelled Gloon.

The boys paid no heed, however, and kicked till they finally hoisted that young moke over the low footboard on to the floor, where he fell with a whack and a thud.

The minute he was out Bob doused the luminary and made a break for the bed, Jack being now in the middle in the warm spot lately occupied by Gloon.

"Wheeah I come in, hey?" asked the latter, as he realized the situation.

"Hang on somewhere on the outside," answered Jack, laughing.

"Don't laugh, you'll shake me out if you do," cried Ben, hanging on to Jack.

"You two fellows keep quiet and go to sleep," muttered Bob, edging in from the outside.

"Oh, there's plenty of room," cried Jack, as he gave a hump and made way for Bob.

Way for Bob, meant away with Ben, however, and the youngster lost his grip and rolled on the floor in a trice.

Gloon could not see what had happened, but he knew there was room in that bed for him if he got there soon enough, and he made all haste to connect.

He got in all right, but it was at the foot, but that did not matter so long as he was there somehow.

Then Ben ran around and got in on the other side, leaving Bob in the middle and Jack on the other side.

"Stop kicking," yelled Bob, suddenly letting fly with his foot.

"Whoa dar! Dat my shouldah, don' yo' know it?" yelled Gloon.

"Stop yourself," said Ben, and then he launched a kick in the dark.

"Gorry! Dat am my stummick now."

Then all three boys got to kicking so furiously that the poor moke was fired bodily out of that bed for the second time since he had been in it.

It was wonderful how quiet those three boys were after Gloon got out, however, for not a sound or a motion could be heard.

"Make room fo' me, Marse Jack," asked Gloon, presently, as he came up to where Jack lay.

Jack gave a grunt and a shove and secured middle place, but Ben, who had been pushed out, vaulted right over the bed and got the other outside berth before Gloon could secure it.

However, the boys let the coon sneak in at the foot, as he had done before, for he was beginning to shiver with the cold.

"Hey, you boys up there," suddenly cried the old woman from below. "If you make any more racket I'll come up an' cowhide the hull on ye."

Nothing but the regular breathing of those boys could be heard, and the old woman went back to her room.

Jack had had all the fun he wanted for one night, and was now ready to go to sleep, especially as he had the best part of the bed.

It was a snug fit for the three of them with the coon at the bottom, but the room was cold and airy, and so they didn't mind lying closer than common.

Gloon did not take any more flying leaps over the footboard, as the young jokers concluded to give him a rest, and he slept as snug as a flea on a dog for the balance of the night.

The next morning after breakfast the Rolling Stone and his ally set out once more on their travels toward the promised land, otherwise New York.

They struck the upper part of the city, on the further side of the Harlem bridge, late in the afternoon, just before dark.

They were in New York, sure enough, but they had no money, their clothes were neat, but none of the best, and they didn't know a living soul to whom they could go for advice, assistance, or, what is better yet, board, lodging and cash.

Jack saw the sign of a cheap restaurant on a side street, and thither he steered on the lookout for a job.

It was not quite time for the evening trade to begin, and so the boss of the place happened to be unoccupied when Jack and Gloon went up to him as he sat at his desk.

"Have you got anything that we can do, sir?" asked Jack.

"Go back to the kitchen and ask the head waiter or the cook," said the proprietor. "I think there is."

"Am dey gwine to gib us suffin to eat, Marse Jack?" inquired Gloon, anxiously, as he followed Jack.

"Maybe so—that all depends."

Making his way to the rear of the establishment, Jack delivered

the proprietor's message to the first person he saw, who proved to be the carver.

"We're a waiter short, ain't we, Jim?" asked the carver of the boss cook. "Didn't Tom go off this afternoon?"

"Yes, he and the coon outside."

"Then, young fellow, if you can take an order, there's a chance for you," said the other.

"Is there anything for my friend?"

"Yes—fill water pitchers, look after the butter plates, fill the sugar bowls, see to the castors, wash dishes, scour knives and forks, scrub the—"

"That's quite enough to start on," said Jack.

"I don' car' wha' I do ef I don' hab to go 'way f'om Marse Jack," added the ebony image. "Jes' yo' tol' me wha' ter do, an' I does it fast-class."

"Guess you'll do," laughed the carver, and, after having seen the boss, Jack and Gloon were soon installed in their new duties.

Jack, in a dirty apron and a towel thrown across his arm, took the orders of certain of the customers, bawled them through a little hole in the wall at the back of the room, took the dishes from the same place and then returned to his tables.

At first there wasn't much of a run, and Jack got along pretty well; but at last the place became overcrowded, and then the new waiter got things a little mixed.

One old duffer, with a foot like a coffin, which he threw all over the floor, made Jack trip as he was coming along with a bowl of hot soup.

The soup spilled on the cloth, and Jack just saved himself from falling by bracing against the table.

"Where are you going to?" snapped the man with the big feet.

"Do you want the whole floor?"

"I would if I had your feet," retorted Jack. "Have to go out backwards before you can turn around, don't you?"

"Don't you give me no sass, young man. Fetch me a beefsteak, well done, and be quick about it."

"Porterhouse steak?"

"No! Do you think I'm a boodler?"

"Sirloin?"

"No."

"Oh, you want a ten-cent steak, do you?" laughed Jack. "From the lugs you put on I thought you wanted a tenderloin and mushrooms."

"No back talk, young man, or I'll report you."

Then Jack delivered his soup and hurried back to the order window.

"Hallo, Joe," he whispered to the cook. "Get me the toughest ten-cent steak you can find. There's a high-toned bluffer out here that wants to be taken down."

"Who is he?"

"Man with big feet."

"I know the snoozer," laughed Joe. "Every man in the place is stuck on him. I'll fix you."

"Get an old boot leg, if you can't find anything else."

Joe laughed, slapped something on the fire, let it stay for a couple of minutes, clapped it on a plate, soused some watery gravy over it, stuck on a bit of strong butter and handed it through to Jack.

Our hero collared on to the bread and trimmings for the steak, and then sailed along till he reached his ugly customer.

When the latter undertook to cut that steak he found he had a big contract on hand.

He sawed and he tugged and he grunted; he sent the cruet stand flying, he upset the salt, he spilled a cup of coffee belonging to a fellow opposite, and grew as red in the face as a butcher.

Still he had not cut through the steak, though he was sweating like a bullock and doing his level best.

"What sort of darned beefsteak do you call this?" he growled, making a fresh attack.

Then the whole business slipped away from him, the plate went scurrying across the table, the steak dropped on the floor, the water pitcher on the corner of the table tumbled off with a crash, and things were mixed up generally.

Then the fellow with the overgrown feet got mad and yelled for the boss, but that individual was too busy.

"Get a sharper knife and try it again, cully," said a tough Harlemit across the aisle. "Dem tough steaks is de best, 'cause dere's more chaw in 'em dan dere is in yer slaughter-house kind."

"Stamp on it and make it fit to eat, that's what you've got to do," said somebody else.

"You ain't got no muscle if you can't cut a beefsteak."

"Let the horse cars run over it and it'll be all right."

"Go fetch me another steak," growled the customer. "I can't eat this, it's all dirt."

"I'll wash it off for you," said Jack, as he grabbed up the tough subject.

Then he took a tumble as to its real character.



It wasn't a piece of meat at all, but a slice off of the carver's leather apron.

No wonder the fellow with the huge understandings could not cut it.

It would have been a seven days' wonder if he could, with the knives furnished in that hash foundry.

Jack went back with the burglar-proof steak and presently returned, saying:

"Small steaks all out. Give you a sirloin if you like."

"No, I don't want anything."

"Coffee?"

"No."

"Pork and beans?"

"Get out," and Bigfoot arose in wrath.

"Fried tripe?"

"No," and the fellow walked out as mad as an Indian.

"I'll bet you only had ten cents to start with," chuckled Jack, "but you put on as much style as if you owned New York."

"I'll report you, young fellow," growled the owner of the big pedals, but he did not, and Jack learned that he was a chronic crank, and that every waiter in the place hated him.

"Guess we'll get rid of him now," laughed Jack.

"That rhinoceros hide steak was too much for him."

Jack and Gloom got on very well that night, and had a good supper and breakfast and a place to sleep, but Jack was not dead mashed on the hash handling business, and determined to give it a shake.

He and Gloom left the place an hour or so after breakfast without saying when they would be back, and started for the bridge.

As they neared the further end of the draw Jack saw that it was about to be opened to let a schooner pass through, and that people were already running to get off.

He quickened his pace and got off just in time, leaving Gloom a few paces behind.

"Wheah is yo', Marse Jack?" cried the little coon, suddenly losing sight of Jack in his interest for other things, all so new and strange.

Then he started forward, when suddenly he saw the bridge break right in two in the middle, as he supposed, leaving him on one end and Jack on the other.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"Hol' on, dar; I'se gwine to York.. I isn't gwine back to de country."

So yelled Gloom as the draw of the big Harlem Bridge swung out over the river.

He thought sure that the bridge had broken in two and that he would never see Jack again.

"Whar is yo', Marse Jack?" he yelled, running up to the gate put across the edge of the draw. "What done happen to youse?"

"It's all right," laughed Jack from the main part of the bridge.

"No, sah, it amn't all right; de bridge am done busted in two bits. Come back yer an sabe dis chile."

The more the draw swung out the more he was convinced that something was wrong, and he wouldn't have it otherwise.

He was bound to get at Jack, even if he had to jump into the river to do it, and this he now attempted to do.

He climbed up on the gate, and was half over, when somebody yanked him back again.

"Hol' on, don' yo' do dat," he protested indignantly. "Specs I'se gwine to stay on dis yer bridge an' see it go to pieces? No, sah, I reckon I'se safer in de ribber dan up yer."

At this time the draw had swung out as far as it would go, and now a little tug-boat came snorting up the river, drawing a barge after it and making a great deal of commotion.

"Fo' goodness sake, am dat de debil let loose?" cried Gloom, in great alarm, as the tug went puffing through the gap. "Gorry! Good t'ing I didn' jump into de ribber. He cotch me shuah ef I did."

In fact, the tug had more terrors for him than the strange actions of the bridge, and he held tightly on to the railing till it had passed.

In his excitement he forgot all about the draw, and it had nearly swung into place again before he noticed the change.

Everybody around was laughing at him, while he was all of a shake, and not knowing at what moment the snorting tug was going to come after him.

"Hain't you never seen a steamboat before, sonny?" asked an old fellow near him.

"Am dat a steamboat?" gasped Gloom.

"Why, of course."

"G'way, chile, I knows bettah. Steamboats don' kick up de watah behin' demselves like a dat. Dey go swish-swish wif deir arms, and not wif deir heels, honey. Guess I knows, case I'se seed 'em afo'!"

Just then the draw came into place again, and the gates were opened, the crowd rushing through in mad haste as they always do in a big city.

"Fo' goodness sake, am de bridge mended so quick?" muttered Gloom, as he was nearly carried off his feet.

Then he caught sight of Jack and rushed to meet him with such impetuosity that he ran against a fat Dutchman carrying a keg of beer on his shoulder with such force that the man was staggered.

"Och! Where you vas went so fast?" growled the Dutchman.

Then the keg of beer lost its balance and came down on the bridge floor with a bump that nearly started the bung.

It started something else, though, for it rolled over and struck a darky carrying a pail of whitewash on his shins, and made him yell blue blazes.

Away went the whitewash, covering the Dutchman from head to foot, and making him utter broken English by the yard.

The colored gentleman sat down on the keg and rolled over, yelling like a stuck pig, while others came down on top of him, his struggles and floundering having taken them off their pins.

"Ach, mein bier! Mein bier vas get lose himselluf," roared the Dutchman, spitting the whitewash out of his mouth. "Hellup, bolices, murder, vatch!"

That little coon had produced the liveliest kind of a time in a brief space, and after he had extricated himself things were still in a tangle.

First the Dutchman made a dash for his keg, spattering the whitewash right and left without regard to the clothes of his neighbors.

Then the darky tried to find his pail and brushes, and ran afoul of the Dutchman in the quest.

Germany thought Africa was the prime cause of all the trouble, and, getting his mad away up, pummeled the colored gentleman on the nose.

The coon retaliated with a blow in the Dutchman's stomach and doubled him up, whereupon he walked off, having rescued his pail, leaving the Dutchman to get up the best way he could.

The beer-drinker finally collared his keg and hurried away with it for fear some other accident might happen to him or it before he got home.

"That was a nice little racket you stirred up, my colored friend," said Jack, as he and Gloom walked down the avenue together.

"Fo' Gawge, I'se so 'fraid I lose yo' dat I didn't see nuffin', Marse Jack," muttered Gloom, looking back over his shoulder.

"What are you looking at?" asked Jack, when the coon had repeated this performance several times.

"Lookin' to see ef de bridge am dere yet, Marse Jack," answered the darky.

"Oh, yes, it's still there," said Jack, with a laugh, "and is likely to be for some time."

"Didn't it break in two jes' now?"

"Yes, but then it's used to doing that."

"Ain't dey 'fraid it won' come togeder ag'in some day when it do dat?"

"It hasn't done it yet."

"Gorry! Reckon I don' go ober dat yer bridge any mo' dan I kin help, Marse Jack. S'pose it fall down some time?"

Jack laughed but did not offer any explanation, leaving the poor moke to wonder how long the bridge would stand that sort of thing.

He kept looking back until he could no longer see the structure, and after that he would listen every now and then so as to hear if the bridge had yet fallen down.

Finally, after looking at the various things to be seen, Jack turned down a quiet street, where he could see a dock and some vessels unloading a little way down.

"I wonder if we couldn't strike a job, Gloom?" he said, as the darky followed.

"Wouldn' min' strikin' suffin' to eat, Marse Jack."

"Same here, my friend, but we're in a town now where it's necessary to work before you can get anything to eat."

Then they kept on till they reached the dock, at one side of which a schooner was lying, some men being engaged in unloading bricks from the hold.

Jack went up to a man who appeared to be the boss and said: "Good-day, sir. Got any work for me and the nig?"

"You can help unload these bricks if you like. We want a man in the hold to load the tubs. The coon can tend the guy rope."

Jack accordingly went down into the hold to assist at filling a big square box with bricks, this being hoisted out by means of a horse and a rope and unloaded on shore.

For a time Jack worked away vigorously, until he noticed that his comrade was not doing his share of the work.

The fellow sat propped up against the bricks and gazed stupidly in front of him, without offering to raise a hand.

"You're a lazy fellow, I think," said Jack. "Why don't you go to work?"



"Wha' zay?" asked the man, stupidly.

"Whew! How much did you pay for that breath?" asked Jack.

"Wha' zat?"

"Don't turn your head this way or I'll be paralyzed," cried Jack. "Where did you get the load? You'll never be able to get out of this place alone."

"Have a drink?" asked the fellow, producing a bottle.

"No, thanks."

"A' right, zat'll make mo' fo' me," muttered the tipsy fellow, as he contrived to get the bottle to his lips.

He took a big horn, and then braced himself up against a pile of bricks, and was fast asleep in a moment.

"Below there!" cried a man on the dock, and in another instant the box came clanking down the hatchway.

Jack did his best to fill it, but he had not half finished when the man above yelled out:

"Now, then, lively down there, I can't wait all day. If you can't work faster I'll get someone else."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" laughed Jack to himself. "All right, then."

Thereupon he grabbed the drunken man by the collar, gave him a yank and toppled him over into the box.

"Hoist away!" he shouted.

The horse was whipped up, the rope drew taut, and up went the box out of the hold.

When it was lowered the foreman saw its strange contents and laughed.

"Well, if that's the way Joe does his work, no wonder the box ain't filled up faster," he said.

Joe did not hear what was said, however, but lay on the bricks utterly paralyzed, snoring like a pig.

The men all gathered around, laughing at him, and finally the foreman said:

"Let's give him a rouser, boys. He ought to have a little water after all that rum."

One of the men dropped a bucket over the side, hauled it up full of water and doused the whole business over the sleeping sot.

It took two or three doses to rouse him, and then he got up, shook himself, looked around and remarked drunkenly:

"Shut the winder, somebody; it's rainin' in here putty hard."

"Give him another," cried the boss, and Joe got an additional ducking which made him gasp and nearly took him off his feet.

"Hol' on, gimme my umbreller, it's pourin'," he muttered, as he started to run.

He was pretty unsteady on his feet yet, and, before he or any one else could tell what was going to happen, he had plunged head first from the dock into the river.

Somebody hauled him out, and by this time he was tolerably sober and mad enough to want to lick the whole crowd.

Jack had come up out of the hold by this time, and he enjoyed the fun as much as anybody.

"Pretty lively fellow when he isn't drunk?" he asked, with a laugh. "Wants to clean out the whole gang."

"Yes, but the trouble is he gets drunk too often, and the other men generally shield him, and so he gets off easy."

Jack, however, thought it was more fun to show the fellow up, and so it was for everybody except the drunkard himself.

Joe concluded not to tackle the gang just then, however, and staggered off up the street to a house where he could get dry outside and wet within, while the others went on with their work.

When noon came they all knocked off, and while some went below, other adjourned to a cheap dining saloon not far away, leaving the wharf deserted.

After getting something to eat in the schooner's fore-castle, Jack came on deck and sat in the sun for a quiet loaf, Gloom sitting on a pile of ballast not far away.

Presently a man came, pulling a boat down the river, stopping alongside the schooner and coming on board.

"Boss here?" he said to Jack.

"Down below."

"All right," and the fellow winked and went down into the cabin where the boss was.

Jack went to the side, looked over and saw a coarse bag in the bow of the boat, which was torn at one end and seemed to contain sugar.

"I've got a fine bag of it up there in the boat," he heard the man below say, as he turned from the rail, "and I'll sell it cheap."

"The cops didn't get on to you?"

"No, I was too fly for that. I got it from a schooner last night—good sugar, too."

"Well, old Moses will be along pretty soon, and he'll buy it, I guess. I told him I thought I'd have something for him."

"Oho, this fellow is a river thief, is he?" thought Jack. "Guess I'll put up a job on him."

Then, beckoning to Gloom, Jack called him amidship and said:

"Pick up one of those sand bags, Gloom, and hand it over to me when I get in the boat."

"All right, Marse Jack."

The Rolling Stone then got into the boat, pulled aside the bag of sugar and put a bag of sand in its place.

He then ripped a hole in the latter with his knife, and sprinkled a handful of sugar in the hole.

After this he passed the bag of sugar on deck, and he and Gloom stowed it away out of sight under a lot of old ropes and other rubbish.

Then they went off and appeared to be fast asleep when the owner of the boat came up from the cabin.

Pretty soon an unmistakable Jew with a hook nose and a long beard, wearing an old plug hat, a faded blue coat, and baggy trousers of a very loud pattern, came shuffling along the dock.

"Goot-morgen, mein freund," he said to the river man, as he scrambled on board. "Vas you got somedings for Moses to-day, ain't it?"

"What d'yer say to some shug?"

"Yaw, dot vas ferry fine, mein freund. I vas got a sweet dooth mineselluf, und dot sugar vas nice."

"Bet yer life, it is de best Demerarer sugar in de market, an' I've got a bag of it in der boat."

"You vas imbort dot sugar yourselluf, mein freund?" laughed the Jew.

"Oh, yes. I imported it," and the river operator chuckled.

"Let me taste some off dot sugar und I tells you off I buys him."

"What'll yer give me fur the lot?"

"How I know, off I don't see him once?" cried the Hebrew, stamping his foot.

"Oh, well, yer needn't get huffy about it, Moses."

"Chow me dot sugar und I tells you vat I do mit him."

The man jumped into the boat, scooped up a handful of the sugar, and passed it up to Moses.

The latter clapped a lot of it in his mouth and began to munch on it.

"Ach, Gott, vat vas dose?" he cried suddenly, spitting the stuff out.

"Ain't that good sugar?" asked the man in the boat.

"Ach, donnerwetter, does you call dot sugar vunce?" snarled the Jew, dancing up and down and spitting out the stuff.

"Cert, and de best sugar in de dull market, too."

"Ach, sufferin' Moses! I vas a fool, I dinks."

"What fur?"

"I breaks mein fist mit your nose, mein freund," and the Jew began to tear around like a cat in a fit.

"What have I done?"

"Yust you taste dot fery fine sugar off yours vunce, und you found dot out, mine shild."

"If dat ain't good sugar I'll eat der hull bag," and the fellow scooped out a big double handful.

There were three or four men on deck by this time and he passed some to all of them, including Jack and Gloom, who had suddenly awakened, strange to say.

Then all hands got a taste.

The expressions of opinion were many and various.

"Great Caesar's shoe-strings!"

"Ugh! It takes a fellow's teeth out!"

"Who in blazes put up that job on me? I'll paralyze the snoozer if I catch him!"

"Sand, as I'm a sinner."

"How you like dot nice sugar, hey, mein shild?" asked Moses.

The dealer had just got a dose himself, and he nearly turned inside out in consequence.

"Dot vas been a fine article, don't it?" asked Moses. "You vas eat der whole bag, ain't it, mein freund?"

Then the whole crowd sputtered and spat and wiped their mouths and made all sorts of faces.

It was as funny as a circus to see the time they made over it, for that sugar turned out to be not only sand, but the coarsest, dirtiest, saltiest sand at that.

"I'd like to slug the sucker that stole my sugar," growled the man in the boat.

"Ach! You vas nefer had some sugar at all, I told you vunce," cried Moses. "Dot vas on'y sand all der dime, und you vas mean to sheat me, so hellup me Isaac!"

"Get out, you long-legged Sheeny," cried the river skinner, coming on board.

"Vat you say?" cried Moses, in a rage. "De last dime you soldt me some cigars dey vas all kraut, mein shild, und der visky I gets von you vas vater und finegar von halluf, mein tear. I toldt you dot you vas a shkin, mein shild."

"I'll take the roof off your head if yer gimme any sass, you Sheeny loafer."

"I bunch your snood vunce, off you calls me names, you Irish snoozer."

"Who's Irish?"

"You vas vunce, und a swindler."



"How's dat for Irish, once?"

The liveliest kind of a row now took place on the schooner's deck. The river thief, not relishing having his honor called in question, took the Jew a crack on the nose with his big fist.

The Jew raised his big foot, planted it in the other's stomach and fired him across the deck, slap against the rail.

Then one of the brick handlers picked up a sample of the schooner's cargo and took off the Jew's hat with it, narrowly escaping carrying away head and all.

The Jew swore by all the ancestors of his race to be avenged, and immediately set upon the smallest man in the gang and proceeded to carve his name on the fellow's hide.

The boss objected, and knocked Mr. Moses down with a belaying pin so quick that it took his breath away.

Then all hands proceeded to have fun with that Israelite, each in his own peculiar fashion.

They hauled him along the deck by the heels, they dashed cold water over him, they stood him on his head to let him drain, they piled sand on his head, they pounded the soles of his feet with bricks, and they tore his beautiful blue coat into shreds.

Jack stood aloof and watched the whole show, enjoying it hugely but taking no part in it.

At last, however, Moses got out of the bulrushes and made his escape, and then, not having had fun enough and lacking a subject, the boys took charge of the dealer in illicit sugar and proceeded to make it warm for him.

They ripped up his shirt, they poured sand down his back, they pulled off his boots and rubbed his feet with a brick, they soused him with salt water, they blacked both his eyes, and ended by chucking him overboard and making him swim ashore.

"Things are getting a little too lively here," muttered Jack, as he quietly slipped ashore, followed by Gloon, none too soon, either, for those frolicksome schoonerites were looking for a fresh subject to experiment upon.

Walking along the dock, the boys found a comical-looking Irishman sitting on the extreme end of it with a fishing pole and line in his hand and a basket by his side.

"Good-day, Paddy," said Jack.

"Faix, and why do ye call me Paddy whin it's John in me papers?" asked the Mick.

"I thought it might be Paddy by the looks of you," retorted Jack, with a grin.

"Sure then your name is Denis by your looks, for it's no good ye are."

"What are you doing down here?"

"Is it blind ye air that ye have need to ax? Can't ye see I'm fishin'."

"What are you catching?"

"Begob, I didn't know I'd cot annything yet, but maybe yez can see betther than I can."

"What are you trying to catch, then?"

"Fish, ye natheral. Did ye think it was rabbits or would pigs?"

"Well, what sort of fish do you expect to catch, then?"

"Suckers," answered Paddy quickly with a wink, which took in both Jack and the coon.

"You've got one, then," retorted Jack, suddenly.

"Phere is it?" cried Paddy, yanking up his line in a jiffy.

"At this end of your line," laughed Jack.

"Begorra, that's one on me," muttered Paddy, casting in again; "but I say, byes?"

"Say it yourself."

"Where do you live?"

"At home."

"And phere is that?"

"Where we live."

"Is it, faith?" grunted the Mick. "I'm so glad I found it out."

"Don't speak about it."

"And are ye and the naygur twins?" asked the fisherman, wishing to get even with Jack.

"Yes, but that's better than if you and I were."

"Why is it, faith?"

"Because then I'd be a brother to a baboon."

"Yaw, yaw. Ain't ye sorry ye spoke?" laughed Gloon, showing all his teeth and a yard of his throat.

"Are ye luckin' fur annything around here?" asked Paddy, when Gloon had subsided.

"Yes, we want to get a job at tanning hides. Is yours for sale?"

"Faith, I have a job for yez."

"What is it?"

"Baiting hooks to catch eels. Them fellers will bite best at wurruns."

"Take care you don't fall over, Paddy, or there'll be a flood. Those feet of yours are as big as canal boats."

"Troth, if the naygur should fall in the river 'd be dhry in tin minutes, for all the wather would rin down his mouth."

"G'long, Irish," snorted Gloon. "Go hang yo'se'f up to dry; you'se too green."

"Go grind yesilf up fur lamp-black."

"Tra-la-la, alderman," laughed Jack. "Good luck to you."

"Faix, I have cot two flats already."

"But you haven't got them in your basket yet."

"No, but I've an eye on thim."

Then Paddy went on with his fishing, while Jack and Gloon started up the dock.

"I say," whispered Jack, "let's roast the Mick."

"How yo' do dat, Marse Jack?"

"Give him a shove into the water."

"Fo' Gawge, he friken de fishes."

"Let's run back then, all of a suden, give him a push and send him flying."

"Yas'r, dat'll be bully. Him feet am hangin' ober de edge ob de dock now."

"All right, let's get a little nearer, and then, when I say the word, give a rush."

"Dat'll be bully fun."

Then those two jokers started down the dock again, walking noiselessly till within half a dozen paces of the Irish fisherman.

"Let her go!" whispered Jack.

Then he and Gloon stretched out their arms ready to give that Mick the grand bounce, and bore down upon him with a rush.

Just before they reached him he slightly turned his head.

In fact, he had heard them coming.

"Begorry, it's foine fun ye're goin' to have wid me, me buckoes," he chuckled to himself, "but only wait a bit, me leds, an' I'll show ye something betther than that."

On came the boys, intent on their grand snap, with all steam on and the safety valves tied down.

There was fun ahead for somebody, but there seemed to be a diversity of opinion as to who would get the biggest slice.

"Come on, me lads," chuckled Paddy to himself. "I'm waiting for yez."

## CHAPTER V.

The force the boys had been going at carried them over in an instant, and they both went headforemost into the water, as Paddy had thrown his body over to one side, out of their way.

"Yez air foine divers, me lads," laughed Paddy, as they went shooting by him.

Gloon gave a howl as he felt himself going, but that couldn't save him for a cent's worth.

Away he went into the water head first with a splash and a plunge, and in a second was out of sight.

Jack went down at the same time, and then the fisherman on the dock let off a laugh that resounded over the water.

"Sure the salt wather will take the freshness out av him," he remarked, "and it's aisy to see they need it."

Both boys came up at the same time, Jack laughing and Gloon sputtering and choking.

"Good for you, Paddy," called out Jack. "You are not as green as you look."

"Troth, and I can't say the same for ye," laughed Paddy. "Begorry, if ye lived in the counthry the cows 'ud ate yez."

"Don' yo' fink you'se mighty smart?" growled Gloon, swimming toward the dock.

"You're right I do, naygur," said the Mick, "and if ye'd found it out before ye wouldn't have got into the wather."

The boys now swam to the dock, and the Irishman good-naturedly helped them up, although he was obliged to indulge in a quiet little laugh once or twice while he was giving them this assistance.

"Don' yo' know dat watah war col'?" asked Gloon, shivering and shaking from head to foot.

"I s'pose it is, me lad; but ye see the steam-heating company doesn't have jurisdicshun as far as this, or the wather wud be kept at the proper temprachure for bathers. Me brother Tom is an alderman, and I'll shpake to him about it the nixt time I see him."

"The water isn't half as cool as you are," observed Jack. "If you had fallen in it would have been frozen solid by this time."

"Troth, I think your own cheek is sufficient for the purpose," retorted Paddy, "and that's phat makes the naygur so could."

"Yo'll get hot enuff when yo' dies," retorted Gloon, "on'y dey'll hab to hang yo' up befo' de fiah fo' a long time afo' yo'll burn, yo'm so fresh."

"Come along, my black diamond," said Jack. "We must get a chance to warm and dry ourselves somewhere."

They then went back to the brick schooner, where the free fight had subsided, and the men were about resuming work.

Jack told the boss quietly where the bag of stolen sugar, which had caused all the trouble, was hidden, and the man laughed heartily at the trick that had been played upon the Sheeny.

The two wanderers then went into the galley, where they soon



made themselves warm and dry, after which they resumed work and kept at it until night.

The job was then finished, and the foreman gave Jack and Gloom a couple of dollars apiece and told them that there would be some work on the same wharf the next day, unloading a coal barge, if they wanted to take it.

"I'll call and pay my respects in the morning," answered Jack "but I'm so hungry now that I don't know where I'm going to sleep to-night."

The boss laughed, and the captain of the schooner, who was standing near, said, pleasantly:

"If you and the coon want to stay in the schooner all night, to keep watch, you may, and I'll be glad to have you."

"The pleasure is mutual," said Jack, imitating the society drawl, "and I accept yaw favaw with pleasaw."

"Reckon you've lots of fun in you," said the captain, whose name was Baggs, "if a feller only knew how to fetch it out."

"That's what I'm here for, fun," answered Jack, with a wink.

"Can you sing or play on anything?"

"Oh, I can make a noise and worry the life out of a banjo occasionally."

"Can't play the fiddle?"

"No, but the coon can."

"Good enough. We'll have some of the boys, friends of mine, on board to-night, and shake her up lively."

After dark, when the cabin of the schooner was lighted, a number of 'longshoremen, laborers and deck hands came into the place, and Captain Baggs proceeded to make it lively for them as he had promised.

Presently one young fellow, a few years older than Jack, got up and said, taking a chunk of tobacco out of his mouth:

"Dis t'ing is too slow, gents. Lemme give yer a song—one of my own compositions."

Then, much to Jack's surprise, that brazen young gentleman sang a verse of the Rolling Stone's own song, the one he had introduced at Hanford's Museum.

"I say, young fellow, I've got a patent on that song myself," spoke up Jack, "and I'll have to ask you to let it alone."

"What d'yer say?" snarled the other. "Dat song is mine. I'm in der business, I am, and I writ dat song for Tommy Murray, de star comic."

"You're off your wheels," laughed Jack. "Here, Gloom, you know the tune; start her up."

"Bet yo' life I does, Marse Jack," laughed the little ducky, as he took the fiddle from Captain Baggs and set her singing.

"That's it," cried Jack. "Now let her buzz," and, after a little thinking, he rattled off the following:

"There are bummers and duffers you meet everywhere,

In the natural course of events.

Who don't know what it is to act on the square,

In the natural course of events.

For justice and law they have very few fears,

They think nothing of stealing another's ideas,

But some day they will get 'in the jug' for ten years,

In the natural course of events.

There was a laugh all around at this, and the young man with cheek slunk out of sight, utterly abashed.

"Give us some more," cried Captain Baggs.

"I told you I had a first mortgage on that song," said Jack, "and so I ought to have, seeing that I made it up."

"Then this fellow must have heard you sing it."

"Quite likely, as I got it off to three and four different crowds every day for a week."

"Give us the whole of it."

Jack complied with the captain's request and sang all the old and several new verses to the song, working in gags on the company present, much to the amusement of all hands, and was voted a brick by unanimous consent.

Gloom also favored the company with some samples of his ability, and altogether the evening was passed very pleasantly.

Finally the company adjourned to the deck and kept the fun up a while longer, the visitors dropping off one at a time.

Gloom being sleepy, concluded to get a nap, and he presently stole away, went below and turned into the captain's bunk for a nap.

Finally, when there was no one on deck but Captain Baggs, Jack and the schooner hands, the captain said to Jack:

"If you like, you and the nigger can sleep on board to-night and help look after the vessel; I'm going ashore myself."

"Much obliged," said Jack.

"Where's the ducky, anyhow?" asked Captain Baggs.

"I don't know," said Jack, looking around.

"He hasn't gone off anywhere, has he?"

"I don't think so."

Then the captain went below, and there lay Gloom fast asleep in a bunk.

"Guess the coon thought I was going to ax him to stay," he laughed, softly, "and so reckoned he'd get all the sleep he could."

"Let's rig a gag on him," said Jack, who had followed the captain.

"What sort of one?"

"Scare the life out of him, somehow."

"That's a good un, young feller."

"Make him think there's a fire on board, and lock up all the doors and windows."

"Good enough."

Then they both returned to the deck and told the men about the snap they intended to work off on the little ducky.

The cabin doors were closed, fore and aft, the windows secured, and then all was ready.

Taking a lot of old rags and papers, they lighted them and threw them just inside, so they would make a lot of smoke and yet do no damage.

Then all hands began to yell in at the keyholes, the cracks of the doors, and at other places.

"Fire, fire, fire! The schooner's on fire!"

Pretty soon that young moke heard the alarm and awoke with such a start that he banged his head against the top of the bunk hard enough to split the boards.

"Wha' say?" he asked.

"Fire! Fire!" was heard from the deck.

"Fo' massy sakes, de ship done took fiah while I'se asleep," he stammered, jumping out of the bunk.

"Fire! Fire!"

The place was full of smoke, men were tramping about deck, and the greatest excitement prevailed.

"Goodness me, de ship am on fiah and I'se gwine to be burned up."

More smoke, more yells, more tramping about the deck.

Gloom made a dash for the doors, having no notion of being burned up that evening.

To his horror he found the doors securely fastened on the outside.

A cold sweat broke out upon his intelligent forehead, his hair lost its kink, and he actually turned, not pale, perhaps, but the color of coffee with lots of milk in it.

His knees shook and clattered together till he might have been playing on the bones for the noise he made.

"Good Lawd o' massey, let me out!" he yelled.

All the time more smoke was pouring in at the cracks, and the place was like a smoke-house.

All sorts of noises were heard on deck, and the liveliest kind of a tone seemed to be going on.

"Lemme out, I done tol' yer," and Gloom hammered away on the doors in a vain effort to make himself heard.

No attention was paid to him, however, and still the smoke increased.

"Lemme out!" and the frightened coon pounded away for dear life.

He was heard, for all that he thought he was not, and those jokers outside were having a fine time of it.

"He'll think his last hour is come for sure," laughed the captain.

"He likes warm weather, but this getting burned up don't seem to suit," added Jack.

"You won't catch him going to sleep in a strange place again."

"Unless it's an ice box that can't burn down."

Then they all yelled fire once more, and listened for more fun from the cabin.

"Clar' to goodness, if I don' get out one way I do anoder," muttered the terrified ducky.

Then he made a dash through the smoke and reached the rear door of the cabin.

This was locked, however, the same as the other.

"Lor' bress me! Wha' I do now?" gasped the moke.

Then he hammered and kicked and yelled and pounded and roared and screamed, but all to no purpose.

"All ashore!" yelled a hoarse voice outside. "Let her sink."

Then there was a sound of men leaving the vessel's side, and poor Gloom became frantic.

He fell on his knees, he shouted, he blubbered, he yelled, while in his imagination he was already burned to a crisp.

He tried the forward door again, he tried the windows, he tried everything, but all in vain.

"Marse Jack, hab yo' done gone an' lef' me fo' to burn up in dis yer place?" he sobbed.

Jack did not answer him, but he heard some one else say:

"Golly! She makes a bully fire, don't she? Reckon she'll burn down to the water's edge afore she sinks."

That was too much for the excited young colored gentleman, and he tumbled over on the cabin floor in a dead faint.

Meanwhile Jack and the other jokers on deck had allowed the



rags and other rubbish to burn out, and were beginning to think of letting up on the coon and having a grand laugh at his expense. Suddenly, however, Jack heard a heavy fall inside, and then all was silent.

The captain listened at the keyhole a few moments and then said:

"I can't hear nuthin'. Wonder what's the matter?"

"Maybe he's fainted away."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"The thing has gone too far."

"Gosh! Didn't think he'd be so scared as all that."

"We'd better open the door."

"Guess we had."

Then the doors were opened, and the gang rushed in.

There lay Gloom in a swoon on the cabin floor.

"Let's fetch him to," laughed Jack. "Get a rope, put it around him and souse him overboard."

"That'll be boss; suppose we do," roared the skipper.

Then three or four of them picked Gloom up, carried him on deck and laid him down without arousing him.

Captain Baggs got a rope, fastened it about the little darky's body, under his arms, and gave the order to duck him.

Over the side he went, head first, striking the water with a splash.

Then all hands pulled him in, and when he reached the rail let him go again souse into the river.

By the time he arose for the second time he had got his breath and recovered from his swoon.

"Wha' de mattah?" he cried, as the men pulled him up, "am de fiah done put out?"

"Not quite," and as he reached the rail they soused him in again.

"Whoa dar!" he yelled, but then he struck the water and swallowed about two quarts of it.

He came up, puffing and blowing, and started to swim for the schooner.

"All together!" yelled Jack. "Now then, pull him in."

Then they yanked that puffing darky out of the water, and landed him on the deck with a thump.

"Wha' fo' yo' stay on de ship?" he inquired when he got his wind.

"Where else would we stay?"

"But it am gwine to burn to de watah's aide!"

"What!" they all cried.

"It am cotched afiah an' am gwine to be totally 'stroyed."

"What are you giving us?" and they all looked at him in surprise.

"I tol' yo' der was a fiah on de schooner."

"Nonsense!"

"But I hear de cap'n hollah."

"Oh, get out."

"An' smell de smoke."

"Give us a rest."

"An' I done couldn' get out, an' den I go flop ober on de flo' an' don' know nuffin' till I gets in de watah."

"Too thin."

"There wasn't any fire."

"Except the firewater you drank."

"You would go to the captain's closet, would you?"

"And get so drunk you thought the place was on fire."

"So that we had to throw you overboard to soak out."

Poor Gloom was dumfounded at all this.

"Hope to die ef I eber did!" he gasped. "Take my oaf, dey was a fiah in de cabin an' I done get so frikened I go flop on de flo'."

"You must have been dreaming."

"Or else on a big drunk."

"No, sah, neber dranked nuffin'," protested Gloom, his eyes and mouth opening wide with surprise.

"Then you've been dreaming."

"And dey wasn't no fiah?"

"No."

"Don' beliebe it."

"Look for yourself, then."

The place certainly was not burning now, nor was there any smell of smoke in the cabin.

The doors and windows had been opened, and the whole place was now as sweet and clean as could be.

All this had been done while Gloom was being ducked over the side of the vessel.

The coon looked in, then went in a few feet, very cautiously, sniffed around, went in a little further, and then exclaimed:

"Well, dat beat eberty'ing. I war dead sure dey was a fiah."

"Oh, you've been dreaming and had the nightmare," said Jack.

"But wha' fo' yo' frow me oberboa'd, Marse Jack?"

"Because you had the nightmare, I tell you."

"An' I done holla an' raise de deuce?"

"Yes."

"Olar' to glory ef I didn' fink dey was a fiah, I eat my shirt."

"No, you were dreaming."

"Wall, I wasn't dreamin'. I fell inter de riber. Golly, reckon I'se got ter be hung on de line to dry out."

"Go down and change yer clothes," said Captain Baggs.

"Change 'em!" cried Gloom with a snicker. "Gorry, I on'y got two changes, Marse Cap'n—put on an' take off. Ya, ya! Yo' finks I'm a dude, to hab a new suit of close ev'ry day in de week?"

That set them all to laughing again, and then Gloom said, with the air of having struck a bright idea:

"Tol' yo' what, Marse Cap'n, I go down to de cabin an' go to sleep while my close is dryin'. Yo' needn' ter woke me up ef dey done get dry fo' de mo'nin'."

"Guess we'll have-ter let yer," laughed the skipper, "seein' as you're so cute."

Gloom needed no second invitation, but hustled out of his clothes and into bed in a jiffy, while all hands just laid back and roared.

"The weather isn't cold for that moke," laughed Jack.

"No, he seems to be up to snuff," said the captain.

Then, as it was growing late and they were all anxious to get to bed, the captain went ashore and Jack and the men turned in, leaving one man on watch, however, to keep away river thieves and other undesirable customers.

Jack himself came on deck at daylight, and seeing Gloom's clothes laying on a bench by the galley fire, all nice and dry, resolved to play another joke on that sleeping moke.

He got a line, fastened it about the bundle, and hauled it high up in the rigging, where it hung suspended between sky and water.

After a while Gloom woke up and stuck his nose out of the cabin.

"Wheah my close, Marse Jack?"

"Aren't they down below?"

"No, sah."

"Ask the cook, then."

"Hey, Marse Cook, whar am my close?"

"They were in the galley by the fire."

"Am dey dere now? Jess chuck 'em to me, won' yo'?"

"They're not here."

"Then somebody's stolen 'em," said Jack.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, wha' I do in de big city of New York wifout any close?" cried Gloom. "I done got arrested right away. Fo' goodness sake, git me sumfin', ef it ain't more'n a shirt."

## CHAPTER VI.

"Fo' massy sakes, gibe me suffin' to weah, Marse Jack, so's I kin go out on de street."

"I can't spare anything except a collar and a handkerchief. Will they do?"

Poor Gloom had lost his clothes, or supposed he had, and was in an agony of suspense.

"Whar yo' s'pose dem t'ings gone, Marse Jack?" he asked, standing in the cabin door without a stitch on him.

"Gone up, I reckon."

"Ain't yo' got nuffin' I kin put on?"

"I haven't, unless you want me to go naked instead of you."

"Hahn't de cook got suffin'?"

"I'll give ye a old dish cloth," grinned the maker of duff and dumplings.

"G'long wif you'se. How yo' 'specs I looks wif nuffin' but a dish cloff 'roun' me, hey, mistah?"

"That's the best I can do," and cook went on with his preparation for breakfast.

"Don' you s'pose de cap'n hab got some ol' close he don' want?"

"All the old duds he has he wears," was the answer.

"Den wha' I do, h'm?"

"Ask me something easier."

"Why don't you look for your clothes?" asked Jack.

"Wheah I look fo' dem ef dey am done stole f'om me?"

"Why didn't you look out for them?"

"'Cause I was dead sleepy an' couldn', dat's why!" snorted the coon, indignantly.

"Folk can't be expected to look out for your things if you don't."

"I hol' de cap'n 'sponsible fo' de loss ob my close. See if don'."

It was funny to see that diminutive ebony image standing in the doorway, stamping its black foot and gesticulating with both hands, and Jack and the cook nearly went into a fit.

"Stop yo' laughin', I tol' yo'," cried Gloom. "I don' see nuffin' funny 'bout it. Reckon I catch my deff stan'in' yer wif nuffin' on."

"Why don't you go into the galley and sit by the fire?"

"Guess I bettah," and Gloom made a dash for the galley, being terribly afraid that somebody would see him in his airy suit of black.

He reached the cook's apartments without being seen, however, and took a seat on a bench near the open door.

"Wonder if it's going to rain?" mused Jack, looking up.



"If it do, den I stay in de bunk all day till de cap'n fin' my close," mutter Gloon.

Then he put his head out of the door and looked up at the sky to see what sort of weather they were likely to have.

"Jerusalem! What am dat?" he suddenly exclaimed.

He had caught sight of his clothes swinging to and fro in the rigging.

"What's what?" asked Jack.

"Dat fing hangin' up dere ober de ship?"

"Where?" asked Jack, looking in every direction but the right one.

"Why, dere, ob co'se, right oberhead," and Gloon came out on deck and pointed up to the bundle of clothes.

"Why, I'm blessed if it don't look like a shirt and a pair of pants—yes, and a coat as well."

"Fo' Gawge! I b'liebe dem's my close. Swar to goodness, I'se sure dey is."

"Didn't you hang 'em up there to dry yourself?"

"No, sah!" and the little darky looked mad enough to fly. "Yo' specs I'se a bo'n fool?"

"Well, if they are yours, why don't you go after them?"

"How I get away up dere?"

"Climb, of course! There's a regular ladder, isn't there?"

"Why, so dey is."

Then, forgetting all about his nakedness in his anxiety to recover his clothes, the little nig jumped upon the rail and began running up the rigging as fast as he could go.

The ratlines cut into his bare feet, but he curled his toes under, stepped with his heels and made pretty good progress for one unused to such work.

When he was nearly to the top the crew came on deck and spotted him at once.

"Hallo! We've got a monkey on board!"

"Look at the wild man of the woods, broke loose from the show."

"What wind blew that black bird into the rigging?"

"Go get a gun and see if you can hit it."

"Hol' on, stop o' dat!" yelled Gloon. "Don' yo' shoot, Marse Sailorman. I'se on'y a little col'd boy. I isn't a brack bird 't all." At that moment a number of men working at the other side of the dock came along.

"Would yez moind the phat-is-it on the schooner!" cried one.

"Begorrah, he'd ought to have more daycincy than that, to go climbin' about wid iverybody lukin'."

"Ah, go smother yourself. Don't you see he's got on black tights? He's one of the fellows from the circus over in Morrisany."

Just then Captain Baggs himself appeared on the scene.

"Get my pistols!" he shouted. "I'd like to have a shot at that thing. What is it, anyhow?"

"Fo' massy sakes don't shoot, I tol' yo'!" cried Gloon, who had now collared his clothes.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Well, then, come down and don't go to making a show of yourself up there."

Gloon detached his shirt from the bundle and started to put it on, but this was more of a task than he had anticipated.

The vessel was at rest, to be sure, but even then it was no easy job to sit perched up in the rigging at that height and wrestle with a shirt which the wind persisted in flapping in all directions.

The bundle fell from his hands and struck the cook on the head just as he started to go to the cabin.

Then the shirt nearly got away, and poor Gloon was afraid he would go next.

However, he managed to get into it, button it up and fold it about him, and then he started down the rigging on the run.

He slid part of the way, burning his hands, to be sure, but then he did not mind that so long as he got down.

All hands were laughing at him, and there were quite a lot of men on the dock and on the other vessels near who enjoyed the show.

"Somebody am mighty smaht, I fink," snorted Gloon, as he picked up his things and went into the cabin, "to make a fellah go 'way up dere fo' his fings, wif all dese folks lookin' on."

"Why didn't you ask me, Gloon?" said Jack, with a grin. "You never said a word about my going up to get your things."

"H'm! So I didn'," murmured Gloon. "Anyhow, I s'pecs yo' like to see me make a show ob myse'f, an' I reckon dat maybe yo' wouldn' go up ef I did ax yer."

Then they all laughed again, and the young darky got into his clothes without another word, having nothing to say to practical jokers that would put up jobs on their own friends.

Captain Baggs gave the boys their breakfast, and his vessel was taken out into the stream shortly after to make room for a coal barge.

Jack and Gloon got a chance to work on this, and were kept so busy all day that there was no chance to work off any snaps on anyone.

At five o'clock work was stopped, and Jack and Gloon went up into the street to look about.

They had partially washed up on board one of the vessels lying at the wharf, but Jack was still rather dirty, though Gloon's complexion was of a kind that did not show dirt easily.

Presently, however, Jack espied a little barber shop on a side street, and in he sailed to have his hair cut and get a good wash.

The boss wielder of the razor was a little Dutchman, short, thin and wiry, with a shiny bald head, a gray moustache looking for all the world like a rabbit's tail, and big gold-rimmed spectacles straddling his red nose.

"Goot efening," he said as the boys entered. "Took a seat, chentlemens. One off my clerks was been here in a foo minutes."

"One of your what?" said Jack, soberly, though he was all grin within.

"One off my clerks," returned the Dutchman. "You see I was alone just now already, und dere vas anoder customer waiting, but ven my head clerk comes back mit his supper he looks after you. Don't be in a hurry."

"His clerk, eh?" laughed Jack to himself. "I've heard of sales-ladies and counter-gentlemen, but it's the first time I ever heard of a barber's helper being called a clerk. The world moves."

"Amoose yourself mit der papers a foo minutes," said the Dutchman, lathering the victim in the chair, and not forgetting to put the brush in his mouth.

"Will the German baron or the French count who devotes his spare time to cutaneous cultivation and abrasion be long?" asked Jack.

"H'm?" asked the Dutchman, opening his eyes, while the man in the chair groaned.

"Will your gentlemanly first groom of the shaving mug delay his appearance for any considerable length of time?" answered Jack, with all the gravity of a judge on the bench.

"Spoke United States. I don't understood me dot Latin," cried the boss barber.

"Hurry up, pop," said the customer who was waiting. "He wants to know if the other barber will be long a-coming."

"Ach! I told you once dot my clerk was been here soon already," cried the Dutchman.

"Oh, I didn't know you meant the razor slinger," laughed Jack; but the Dutchman could not see the joke yet, but went on scraping away at the poor fellow in the chair as though he meant to skin him.

The torture was soon over, however, and then, after the man had had his head pummeled and soused and currycombed, anointed with forty rod hair oil, and his hair plastered down on his forehead in an inverted arch, his moustache stiffened with hog's lard, and had been asked to purchase a bottle of tonic, he was allowed to depart in peace.

Then the waiting customer took his seat in the chair, and Jack picked up a four-days' old newspaper and began to read.

Gloon was getting tired of waiting and thinking that the vacant barber's chair which awaited the coming of the "clerk" was more comfortable than the one he already occupied, he forthwith appropriated it.

"Golly, dis am boss," he remarked, as he leaned back and stretched out his feet. "Ef I could raise whiskahs, I come ev'y day to get shaved, dis yer chair am so fine."

Then, having settled himself in as comfortable a position as he could find, he proceeded then and there to drop off to sleep.

He was soon snoring like a pig, and having a fine old snooze, in the midst of which in came the "clerk," a frowsy-headed Dutchman with no more sense of humor than a canal-boat mule has of high art.

"Next gent!" said this specimen, as he threw off his coat and put on a striped jacket which a liberal application of soap and water would have decidedly improved.

"There he is," said Jack, pointing to the slumbering coon.

"Shafe or hair cut?" asked the assistant.

"Shave," said Jack, quietly, and the man of lather proceeded to work with only an eye to business and not even a wink at the humor of the situation.

That coon's face was as innocent of hair as an egg, and would probably continue so for some years, but that made no difference to the barber's deputy.

He had been told to shave the boy and he was going to do it, though the heavens fell.

He began lathering Gloon's face, and covered all but his forehead, nose and eyes with the thick, white coating of soap and water, when Jack thought of something new.

The little moke was so tired out with his day's work that he lay in a dead sleep, and no more minded the lathering than a cat objects to a saucer of cream, sleeping on undisturbed.

Presently, however, as he lay in the chair, his lathered face turned up to the ceiling, the barber having turned to get a razor, Jack let fly his newly-invented snap.

Taking a match from a safe on the wall, he dropped it on the sanded floor right alongside the chair.

It was no down-east, poor-house, sulphur and brimstone match, but one of your big-headed, kill-'em-quick, slap-bang fellows, called



"parlors" by courtesy, but which are more fit for a deaf and dumb asylum or the wilderness, where no one can hear them.

Jack put his heel on the head of that aggressive match, and gave it a sharp grind.

It went off with a report like a pistol, while a puff of smoke arose and saluted Gloon's nostrils.

"Py shiminies, where vas de fire?" yelled the boss barber, clipping a piece out of the ear of the man under his hands.

The deputy barber was as much astonished as his employer, and he, too, must needs make a fuss.

"Fire, t'ieves, vatch!" he yelled.

Lathering his face could not wake up that moke, but a cry of fire could.

He sat bolt upright in an instant and looked around.

Jack stepped on another match and set it off with a bang.

"Fo' goodness sake, dis yer place am gettin' too hot-fo' me!" cried Gloon, and up he got in a jiffy.

He didn't understand the meaning of the big tablespread around his neck, but he tore it off and tore for the door in an instant.

Out into the street he bolted, dashing right into a crowd of men and boys returning from work.

"Fiah!" he yelled, as he upset a man carrying a basket in one hand and a dinner can in the other.

The dinner can was a sectional one, and as it flew out of the laborer's hands it fell apart, the different pieces rolling along the sidewalk in every direction.

"Howly smoke! Luck at the black ghost," cried the man, as Gloon fell over him.

Then the rest of the crowd got on to the fun of the thing and fairly yelled.

A boy with black hands and a face half of which was coal-black and the other half snow-white was enough to make anyone laugh.

"Catch on to the white-faced baboon!"

"Use our soap, that makes a black man white!"

"Wonder if it will all wash out?"

"Dere's a fiah in de barber shop," cried Gloon, picking himself up, as these various remarks were made. "What am yo' laffin' at?"

"Did the Dutchman put the tonic on a red-headed man's hair and cause an explosion?" asked one.

"Guess you were fired out 'cause you talked faster than the barber, weren't you?"

"Maybe you wanted to pay him cash down, and it took him by surprise and he caught fire."

"Shtop dot nigger poy!" yelled the barber himself, now appearing on the scene. "He don'd vas pay for dot ladder ve give him."

"Ain't got no ladder," said Gloon, whom the barber had collared.

"What I do wif a ladder?"

"Dot ladder on your face once; dot vos vot I means."

"I ain't got no ladder on my face. Finks I'se a circus man to go totin' ladders roun' on my nose and balancin' fings on my chin, hey?"

"Dot soap ladder vot vas on your face, I told you," cried the Dutchman. "Don'd you vas ashamed mit myself once to mage me all droubles?"

Then the crowd yelled and Gloon put his hand on his face, when it was at once covered with lather.

"Fo' de land sakes! Hab I been sweatin' all dat much?"

"It's lather, you fool, and you've just come out of a barber shop," said somebody by way of explanation.

Then Gloon remembered and took a small tumble, at the same time glancing reproachfully at Jack, who had come out with the rest.

"Bet my boots yo' done tol' de barber to do dat," he said, but Jack only laughed and suggested going in to have a wash.

Then he had his hair cut, Gloon got over his mad fit, and the barber was satisfied besides.

"Let's go and get something to eat, Gloon," said Jack, as they came out upon the street after leaving the barber shop.

"Neber tort ob it befo', Marse Jack, but now I 'clar' to glory I'se hungry as a biled owl. Funny I didn' fink ob it befo', too."

"I've been thinking of it for some time, my boy. Working always did give me an appetite."

"Lor' a-massy, Marse Jack, I gets hungry jes' de same ef I don' do nuffin'."

"Here's a place that'll do, I guess," said Jack, as he came to a cheap and not over-clean restaurant on one of the main streets.

"Guess we'll get a square meal here for not very much," he said, as he opened the door. "We want to be careful of our money until we get more."

"A' right, Marse Jack, you do de managing, 'cause yo' knows mo' dan I does."

Then they went in and were about to take a seat, when a big fellow in his shirt sleeves, standing behind a low counter, bawled out:

"Now, then, what do yer want, young feller?"

"Something to eat, of course," answered Jack. "What do

folks generally go into restaurants for—to get their boots blacked or their hair cut?"

"Don't allow no niggers in this place," snarled the man.

"All right, then, I'll go somewhere else," and Jack started for the door.

"Hold on," called out the man. "I didn't say you couldn't stay, but I won't have the coon."

"Guess I'se good as white folks if dey behaves demselves," grunted Gloon, sticking up his lips. "I sees lots ob niggahs in yer, an' some o' dem am as brack as I be, ev'y bit."

"They're the waiters," said the boss.

"If the place isn't good enough for my friend, it isn't good enough for me," said Jack, and he started toward the door again. "I'll go find another place."

"Specs we ain't got any money, does you?" said Gloon, turning up his nose as much as it was possible to do. "Well, dat's whar yo'm mistaken," and the coon showed a lot of loose silver.

"Well, said the man, who did not want to lose a good customer, "you can stay, but you'll have to sit at the further end of the shop, or all my customers will be kicking and maybe leave the place."

"I don't care," laughed Jack. "The nearer the kitchen we get the more we'll have for our money."

"Dat's so, we kin smell all de grub a-cookin'," added Gloon.

The two boys walked to the rear of the place and sat down at a small table just big enough for two. Pretty soon a colored gentleman, with a big white apron and a white jacket, and having a dirty towel slung over his arm, came up, scowled and said to Jack:

"What yer gwine to have?"

"Beefsteak, fried potatoes and coffee," said Jack.

"Steak and coffee!" yelled the moke, turning away.

"Hol' on, yo' habn't taken my o'dah!" cried Gloon.

"What d'yer say?" snarled that saucy coon, as he came back a step.

"Take my friend's order and don't have so much gas," said Jack.

"Oh, he's a friend of yours, is he?" said the waiter.

"Yes, and I want you to treat him decent."

"What's yours?" growled the ducky, turning his sulky mug toward Gloon.

"Gib me a big dish ob po'k an' beans, an' some smashed 'tatahs, an' a bowl ob coffee. Reckon I wants as good libin' as oder folks ef I is brack. So dere, yo' sassy niggah."

The fellow bawled out the order, and then went back to get the things he had previously ordered.

"I'll fix that fellow for his impudence," laughed Jack.

"Gorry, Marse Jack, dem city niggahs orter wo'k on a fahm some time, an' den dey don' hab so much chin music."

Pretty soon Jack saw the colored gentleman approaching, with a huge pile of orders on his arm.

Plates, cups and saucers and vegetable dishes were piled up on his arm from his wrist to his shoulder, as high as his head.

Beafsteak, roast pork, mutton stew, apple dumplings, tea and coffee, fried hash, bread and butter, rolls, milk, boiled eggs, and no end of other stuff comprised the pyramid of grub on his outstretched arm.

Along the aisle he came, on the rush, his head stuck away up in the air and a smile of importance on his black mug.

Jack stuck his foot just outside the table leg, but directly in the path of that hurrying moke.

"If there isn't a crash in the market in about two shakes," he muttered, "and a big fall in wool besides, I'm a snoozer and my name isn't Jack Ready."

## CHAPTER VII.

On came that self-important ducky waiter loaded down with dishes of all sorts of eatables.

He came with a rush, and in a second there was a first-class commotion.

All you could see was that coon's flying legs and arms as he vainly tried to recover his balance, together with a confused mass of dishes scattering every which way, caroming on the heads of the customers and making trouble generally.

Pork and beans, corned-beef hash and fried liver and bacon went flying toward the ceiling as if at last the time had come when the pigs would begin to fly, although they are very unlikely birds.

It rained hot coffee for several seconds, and then there came a hail-storm of cups and saucers, and the customers who did not stand from under thought the weather particularly boisterous just then.

Roast-beef and mashed potatoes were plastered against one wall, stewed tripe and onions spattered against the other, sausages and buckwheat cakes paved the floor, and ham and eggs went sailing over the heads of the crowd.

In the midst of all the display, the gyrations of that colored gentleman were the prime feature of the entertainment.



First he made his feet and hands meet in mid-air and tickled his left ear with his right toe.

Then he straightened out, balanced himself on his left foot for an instant, and waved both arms above his head.

After that he threw both feet in the air, landed on his hands, turned a flip-flap in the aisle, and came down on his spinal column with the customary dull, sickening thud.

Such a dance was never seen outside of a theater where the ballet reigns rampant.

And all within the short space of ten seconds.

When that darky finally brought up on the floor amid the ruins of the orders he had been carrying, Jack and Gloom sat at their table as innocent as two owlets.

Jack's feet were in their proper position, and no one would have supposed for an instant that our hero could have caused such a commotion.

The nearest customers jumped to their feet, the boss came hurrying to the spot, the other waiters paused in dismay and there was the liveliest kind of a time for a few moments.

"Get out of here, you clumsy fool!" cried the boss, grabbing the unfortunate waiter by the collar.

Then, as he yanked the fellow upon his feet, he stepped upon a pat of butter that had been mean enough to land just upon that particular spot.

Nobody ever trod upon a well-regulated pat of butter without having something happen.

The usual result occurred in this instance.

Up flew the feet of the boss, while the end of his backbone came in violent contact with the floor.

Down went the colored gent again, and he began to think the weather was particularly bad that day.

He and the boss sat on the floor facing one another with wrath in their eyes.

"What did you pull me down for, you stupid nigger?"

"Wha' fo' yo' haul me off'n my feet, boss? 'Specs I'se fell enough fo' one day."

"You're a fool!"

"You'se anoder!"

"Get out of the house!"

"Specs I will when I get ready."

"What did you want to fall for and smash all this stuff?"

"Done couldn' help it, boss. Dat ge'men tripped me up."

He had forgotten which side of the aisle he had been coming down when the accident occurred.

Consequently he pointed at a fellow from the country sitting on the other side of the passage, just opposite Jack.

"No, I didn't nuther!" cried the member from the rural districts.

"Why, your foot is sticking out six inches now!" cried the boss. And so it was.

"Don't care if it is, I didn't trip the nigger up."

"Take my oaf I sawn him do it, boss," cried Gloom, at that moment.

"So did I!" exclaimed several others.

They were afraid they might be accused of the thing themselves and so made haste to throw the blame on some one.

The word of the veracious Gloom carried considerable weight with it, being backed up by so many, and the boss believed it.

"I say you did do it!" he cried, glaring at the countryman, as he got up, "and you've got to pull out of here putty quick if you don't want to get licked."

"Of course he did it."

"Confounded shame, too."

"Fire him out."

"Spill him into the gutter."

"Take a round out of him."

Thus shouted the fickle crowd, who a moment before would have thrown all the blame on the waiter.

"I'd like to see anyone throw me out!" cried the countryman.

Then he jumped up so quick that he upset the table and a lot of dishes on the floor.

He looked big enough to tackle three men, and if the boss had been alone he would probably have declined the contest.

But the boss was not alone, as the country delegate soon found out to his sorrow.

He was accompanied by a club, not of the stuffed variety, but a good, healthy club with warts on its knobby end.

The boss, the club, the colored waiter and half a dozen diners took the countryman in hand.

Then they proceeded to initiate him into the mysteries of city life.

They hauled him out of that place in a trio of shakes, they pounded his head, they sat on his spine, they traveled over his abdomen and finally swept up the gutter with him.

To add to his comfort a big policeman hauled him in and lugged him off to the nearest station.

"Drunk and disorderly," was the charge preferred against him, and he was locked up over night, probably to be fined ten dollars

in the morning, or released with a reprimand and a warning not to do so any more.

Such is life in a great bustling metropolis.

After the fracas in the restaurant had subsided, the rubbish cleared away, and the unlucky waiter laid off for repairs, our two boys got their supper and then started out to see the sights.

The first thing they struck was a street merchant selling soap and giving away dollar bills with three boxes for ten cents.

"Here you are, gents," he was shouting, as he stood in front of a little stand on which was an open valise, "the best olive oil soap, good for the complexion, makes your hair grow, polishes your teeth, removes corns, warts and bunions, and gives you an appetite."

"Golly! Does de folks up yer chew soap?" muttered Gloom.

"This fellow doesn't use it, evidently, by his looks," retorted Jack.

"Walk right up, gents, and buy a box of this wonderful soap—five cents a box, three for ten. Now, just for an inducement, I'll put a dollar in one of the boxes and give you a chance to get it. Every gent that buys three boxes stands a chance of getting a dollar."

Then the fellow took a dollar bill, put it in one of the boxes and dropped it into the bag, apparently.

"There you are, gents; you all saw the dollar. Who's going to take the first chance?"

A fat man with a red nose pushed his way through the crowd, and that gave Jack and Gloom a chance to get right next to the operator and just under the glare of his gasoline lamp.

"I'll take three boxes," said the fat man, as he planked down his dime.

"Help yourself, everything's fair in this shop."

The red-nosed man dove his fist into the bag and took out three boxes of soap, each an inch square and thick.

Then he opened them, but there was never a dollar there.

"Try again, somebody, there's a better chance than ever, and, to make it livelier, I'll put in another dollar."

Then he went through the same business as before, Jack and the coon watching him eagerly.

"There you are, gents, try your luck, three boxes for ten cents, and a chance of getting two boxes with a dollar in them."

Now Jack had not traveled for nothing and experience had sharpened his eyes as well as his wits.

He caught on to where the fellow had put the prize boxes, which was not in the main bag, but in a pocket deftly concealed behind the mass of packages in the open space seen by all.

"I'll take a whack at that!" Jack said, slapping down ten cents and instantly diving his hand into the hidden pocket.

The fellow was fly, but not fly enough for the Rolling Stone, who had quickly caught on to the little game.

Down went Jack's hand into the treasure room and up it came with three boxes of soap.

The fellow colored, and as Jack moved off he said:

"Think you've got something, don't you?"

"Reckon I have," laughed Jack.

"Well, I'll bet you half a dollar you haven't."

"Ain't betting, sonny," said Jack, moving further off.

He was too cunning to exhibit his find in that crowd and certainly be robbed, maybe knocked down and abused by the fellow's pals.

"Bet you daren't show up," continued the man. "Bet a dollar you won't buy three more boxes for a dime."

"Double your money, you've got a sure thing," laughed Jack.

"I may be from the country, but I've heard tell of bluff before!"

"Hey! Come back here!" cried the fellow, as Jack and Gloom left the crowd.

"Not this evening. Good-by, Soapy!" and Jack skipped out, leaving the fellow growling at his bad luck.

It was good luck for Jack, however, for each one of those boxes contained a dollar note neatly folded up.

"Golly, how yo' cotch on to dem?" asked Gloom, when Jack showed up.

"Well, I've seeh the thing done before, up in the country, but never could tell how it was worked till now, but this time I twigged."

"Golly! We'se be rich ef we strike luck like dat ev'y day, Marse Jack."

"Yes, unless those fellows get on to us, post their pals and stop business every time we come around."

They had gone about a block further down the street, when Gloom suddenly paused before a well-lighted clothing store.

A big Jew with a hook nose, a long heard and glittering eye was standing by the door looking out in search of a possible victim.

He had noticed the boys, and now, as they started on once more, he bounced out of the store and swooped down upon them.

"Walk right in, young chentlemans," he cried in most affable tones. "I vill fit you owit von bottom to top right away mit all der ladest styles."

"We don't want anything," said Jack.



"Yust walk in and look off de stock, mein friend. I sharge you nodings to look off dose glose. Vas I ax you to buy somedings? Nein, my shild, I vas yust ax you to look."

"What's the use of looking when I don't want to buy?"

"Maybe your sunburned friend vas vant to buy somedings den?"

Then, without waiting for an answer, the Jew collared Gloon and yanked him into the shop.

Jack followed as a matter of course, for he was bound to protect his comrade from the ravages of the Philistines.

"Vat you vant, a goat, or maybe a pair off bants?" and Moses hauled down a coat much too big for the little nig, and asked him to try it on.

"Fife tollars, my poy, vasn't dot a pargain. You took dot goat home once und off you don't like it in de mornin', you prings 'im pack already, und I takes it von you, supcheck to de fluctuations off der goat market."

"H'm?" said Gloon, inquiringly.

"Off goats goes down, you vas lose der difference, off goats goes up you vas made somedings, und you have de goat to vear ofer night pesides. Dot vas fair, don't it."

"Specs I wear dat coat?" laughed Gloon, holding it up. "Bress yo' hawt, Marse Sheeny, I gets lost ef I puts on dat yer coat, an' yo' hab to sen' de town crier out fo' to look fo' a lost child."

"No, mein friend, dot goat fits you yust like a glove, vunce."

"Like a boxing glove, I guess," laughed Jack. "It's miles and away too big."

"Vell, dry it on yourselluf once," said the Jew, quickly. "It don'd vas been too pig for you, I dinks."

"But I don't want it."

"Vell, dere vas no harm mit drying it on, ain't it?" snapped Moses. "You don'd know vat a fit dot vas."

"Does yo' gub folkses fits?" asked Gloon, becoming alarmed.

"Ya, mein friend, fits off clothes, not der oder kind off fits."

"Let me try it on," said Jack, struck with a sudden idea.

"Ya, I tort you vas a sensible poy already," grinned Moses, taking the coat from Gloon.

Then Jack took off his own coat and handed it to the coon, at the same time giving him a significant look.

"I wraps dot goat up for you once," cried Moses, handing Jack the new one. "Hey, Levi, yust come here und wait on der shentle-mans!"

"Never mind that," said Jack, quickly, as he got into the coat and proceeded to button it up.

"Yust walk ofer to der class und look at yourself. Py shimminies, you vas took yourselluf for the bresident, you look so fine."

"Does it fit?"

"Does it fit, my shild?" cried the Jew, elevating both shoulders as high as his head. "De bark mit dose drees couldn't vas fit petter. Dot vas a perfect fit, my poy."

"Ow, oh, ah—Jerusalem! I've got one coming on now!" cried Jack, suddenly beginning to squirm and wriggle, and writhe, and make all sorts of faces.

"Vat vas der matter?" cried the Jew rushing up and trying to seize Jack.

Gloon got in his way, however, and nearly tripped him up, that moke being up to snuff, if he was little.

"Ouch—blazes—take 'em off—give me air—the fit's coming!" yelled Jack.

Then he squirmed and twisted, and contorted himself like the human snakes one sees on the circus posters, but not elsewhere.

After a few seconds of this sort of exhibition, he suddenly flopped over, landed on his shoulders right on the dusty, greasy floor.

"Ow, oh, holy smoke!" he yelled, as he turned over quicker than lightning and rolled upon his stomach.

After this he went scudding along the floor at the rate of a hundred revolutions a minute, scooping up all the dirt within a circle of twenty feet.

All the time he was kicking and writhing, yelling, spitting, groaning and tossing about, making lots of fun for Gloon, but playing the mischief with that cheap garment.

"Fo' massy sakes, get a bucket o' watah an' frow ober him," cried Gloon, who could tumble to a snap when he was not the victim of it.

"Ach, weeping Moses, dot goat vas been ruined once," groaned Moses, trying to stop Jack.

But Jack had not had all the fun he wanted by a good deal.

"Fetch a bucket ob watah," cried Gloon. "De boy hab a fit, an' he done die ef yo' didn' do suffin'."

Levi, the Jew's son, not knowing what the matter was, came hurrying with a big pail of water, thinking that possibly there might be a fire.

"Ach! Don'd do dot once," cried Moses, as Levi was about to deluge Jack.

However, Jack kicked out like a government mule, struck the pail in Levi's hand and knocked it flying.

There was a small-sized Niagara in that clothing shop all of a

sudden, and the floor got the first washing it had received for many a day.

Moses got out of the way of the flood, as Noah did in days of old, and that left Jack a clear field of operations.

"Shlumbering Isaac! I vas pay you ub for dot once," cried the Jew.

Then he planted his big boot on the rear of Levi's trousers and sent him flying ten feet.

"Ach! Shtoopid, vat for you do dot?" and Moses gave Levi his blessing once more and so forcibly that Levi howled with agony.

"Fader! Vat for you kick me like dot?" cried Levi, grabbing hold of his trousers as though he were trying to accomplish the impossible feat of pulling himself off the floor by his suspenders.

"Vat for you spill dot vater on de floor vunce?" and Moses administered another token of his regard and affection where it did the most good.

Meantime Jack had been enjoying himself to the best of his ability.

He flopped over on the wet floor, rolling and rolling and squirming like an animated mop.

Really the floor looked decidedly cleaner than it had done in six years.

"If I had more time," laughed Jack to himself, "I'd make it shine like a ball-room floor."

By the time that Moses had kicked Levi to the further end of the shop, Jack had begun to recover from his fit.

He suddenly straightened up, jumped to his feet, yanked off all the buttons from the coat and threw it open.

"Ha! I feel better now," he said, with a gasp, as he threw off that store coat and chucked it on a pile of other garments lying on a table close by.

"I don't think it's a good enough fit," he coolly remarked, as he took his own jacket from Gloon, and got into it with neatness and dexterity.

Then he donned his hat, which the coon had been holding for him, and said:

"Guess I won't take anything to-night, Solomon Isaacs Levi. Much obliged for showing us around."

By that time the angry Moses had started back on the home stretch.

"Who vas pay me for dot goat vot vas ruined?" he shrieked.

"Ask me suffin' easier," said Gloon, retreating.

"Sell it to a countryman more green than you thought I was," laughed Jack.

"Vait a minute, my friend! I sell you dot goat for two tollars, und glean it up nice."

Then he picked it up and saw that another garment had been ruined by contact with it.

"I vos lose me two goats! Shtop a leedle, my friend, I vas like to talk vit you."

"Not this evening," laughed Jack, as he threw open the door. "I have a very particular appointment with the mayor. Tra-la-la, Abraham, I'll meet you on the doek."

"Jump de guttah, ol' jewsharp, I'll see you some oder time," echoed Gloon, as he skipped out after Jack.

Moses flew after the fugitives, but just as he reached the door it came to with a bang, and he was knocked off his pins.

When he finally got out of the door and looked around, the boys were nowhere to be seen, having skipped out.

"It's frosty weather when the Rolling Stone gets frozen up," laughed Jack, "and I am still on the go and ready for more fun."

## CHAPTER VIII.

When Jack and Gloon skipped out of the clothing store where our hero had worked off such a clever snap on the Jew, they made the best of their time in getting out of sight of the irate son of Israel.

Consequently when Moses picked himself up and went to the door the boys were out of sight, though by no means out of mind.

"I raise de price off obergoats dree hundert ber cent. mit der next customer dot gomes," he muttered sadly. "Dot gountry poy vas been too much for me already—maybe I don'd vas make it ub on der next vun."

Meanwhile Jack and Gloon had skipped around a corner, made a detour and had come out upon the main avenue considerably lower down than where they had left it.

"Tol' yo' what, Marse Jack," laughed the coon, "yo' am de worses boy I eber seed fo' wo'kin' up jobs on de Jews. Reckon dey kill yo' some day ef yo' don' look sharp."

"Moses will club himself all around the shop till he can catch some greenhorn and soak him for all he's worth," returned Jack.

"Bet yer boots he don' let de nex' feller get away afo' he buys a hull suit ob close."

"I guess not, but we aren't as green as we look, hey, Charcoal?"



"Folks what takes us fo' flats is boun' to get lef', Marse Jack, fo' a fac'," answered Gloon, with a broad grin.

"Want some candy, Gloon?" asked Jack, as they came in front of a shop where toys, confectionery and all sorts of things were sold.

"Dat am wheah yo' struck me rale hard, Marse Jack," grinned Gloon. "I allus did hab a bery big toof fo' 'lasses candy. Wondah ef dey keeps it?"

"Fresh every minute," laughed Jack. "Come in and have some. This is my treat."

In they sailed and were greeted with a smile by a young lady in a green frock with pink ribbons in her hair, the reddest of roses in her cheeks, and five-dollar-a-set made-while-you-wait store teeth, as was evinced by their amazing whiteness and astounding regularity.

When she smiled she opened her mouth wide enough to exhibit all her crockery and a quarter section of her throat, and Gloon thought for a moment that one of his native Southern alligators was beaming upon him.

"What do you wish?" gurgled the damsel. "We are always pleased to wait on strangers."

"Taffy," said Gloon.

"Chestnuts," warbled Jack.

"Tain't taffy, it's the truth," snapped the girl, as her professional smile suddenly faded away into the dim goneness.

"Hahn't yo' got no taffy, nor 'lasses candy?" asked Gloon.

"Nor chestnuts, nor peanuts, nor walnuts?" asked Jack.

"Oh!" and the smile was turned on again with full force, likewise the glance of those dazzling grinders.

"Five cents' worth of each," said Jack, "and you can give them to the black prince at my elbow."

Then while Gloon was masticating a square inch of sweetness, Jack purchased a box of paper caps for use in the pernicious toy-pistol and stowed them in his pocket, having previously sowed the floor nearest to the door with some of the pink wafers.

"Come along, that's all right," said Jack, suddenly, darting toward the door in a jiffy.

"Hol' on!" shouted Gloon. "Dis chile yet los' ef yo' run away so bery sudden."

Then he started toward the door in a hurry, planting his big feet with no light tread on the sanded floor.

Snap—snap—bang!

Those trip-hammer feet of his had landed on the caps and caused a series of explosions.

"Fo' massy sake wha' dat?" and the young coon jumped a foot from the floor.

When he came down again there were more reverberations.

"Land sakes!" shrieked the maiden at the counter, narrowly escaping gulping down her store teeth, so suddenly did she jump backward.

"Bress my heart, somebody done shoot dis niggah, I reckon!"

Then Gloon made a dash for the door, setting off half a dozen more of the snappers before he got out.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack, as innocently as a sugar cupid, when his colored coadjutor rejoined him.

"Didn' yo' heah de noise?"

"Yes, but I thought you were sneezing."

"Fo' goodness' sake, dose yo' fink I carries ca't'idges in my 'tummick, an' dat dey goes off when I blows my nose?"

"Oh, you do so many funny things that I'm not surprised at anything nowadays."

"Reckon dat gal got a mash on yo', and she shoot yo' 'cause yo' run away f'om her," laughed Gloon.

"Guess she dropped her teeth, and that was the noise you heard."

Gloon laughed again, but he still had not the remotest idea of what had caused the sudden explosions under his feet.

"Dat boy Jack am allus playin' tricks," he thought to himself, "but I don' see de reason fo' his wantin' to frighten dis chile. Reckon de gal in de green frock done de hull business."

Pretty soon the boys came to a shoe store, and Jack suddenly paused and said to his companion:

"I say, Snowball, you and I need new shoes if we're going to do much more tramping. What do you think?"

"Golly, Marse Jack, I done run so fas' f'om dat Jew store, dat I wore de soles ob my gaitahs clean down to de undah pinnin'."

"Well, here's where sick shoes are heeled, and the troubles of the sole repaired. This is a shoe store."

"Golly! I run away f'om one Jew store a'ready, Marse Jack!" cried Gloon in alarm.

"Well, it's bootless to run now, and you'll be bootless if you keep it up, and here's the shoer, that's sure."

"Neber min' any moah ob dat, Marse Jack. Yo' isn't in de minstrel business now," chuckled Gloon.

"Well, let's go in and see what we can do in the way of getting shod," returned Jack.

Only the proprietor and a couple of clerks were in the place when our two friends entered.

Jack asked to be shown some shoes for himself and friend, and the two clerks at once set about fitting them.

Now that coon, although little in point of size, had big feet, and could discount many bigger men in that regard.

"No Cinderella slippers for the moke," laughed Jack. "Fetch on your pontoons at once."

"Do you want an expensive shoe?" said the clerk who was waiting on the little ducky.

"No, sah. I wan' de cheapes' kin' yo' got, on'y it's got ter be good an' las' long as possumble."

"All right," and the young fellow brought out a shoe which Jack declared was big enough for a trunk.

It would not fit that coon, however, stamp and tug as he would.

"That's the largest we have in that style," said the clerk.

"Put on a thinner sock and then try on the box," laughed Jack, as he dropped three or four of his paper caps in the neighborhood of Gloon's feet.

"Ain't yo' got a bigger one, boss?"

"Not of that style, but I can sell you a bigger shoe for a dollar more."

"Reckon I'll see ef I kin git dis yer on fust," said Gloon, who was unwilling to squander more cash than was necessary on his feet.

Then he stamped his big foot so as to make the shoe fit better.

Crack, snap!

"Golly! Dat candy gal done shoot ag'in!" he cried, jumping up.

Bang!

Snap!

"Fo' goodness sake, sabe me, Marse Jack!" cried the terrified Gloon.

Then he set off some more of the combustibles, for Jack had taken care to scatter them pretty freely.

"Fo' Gawge! I ain't gwine to stay yer fo' to be made a target ob. Neber!" cried Gloon, as he made a dash for the street door.

"Here, come back with that shoe," cried the clerk.

Snap, bang!

Jack set off a couple more of the caps himself, just for fun.

"Land sakes! I'se killed fo' sho'!" and Gloon bolted out of the place and down the street in a hurry.

Having on shoes of different kinds, one tight and the other loose, his progress was not as rapid as it might have been.

"He'll come back," laughed Jack, as the proprietor started up to join in the chase, "when he sees that I am not with him."

One of the clerks had gone after Gloon and the other now followed.

"I think you're a skin," said the boss, as he closed the door and stood in front of it, "but you don't get away if the nigger does."

"What's the matter now?" asked Jack.

"That's a dodge of yours to get away with a pair of shoes, but it won't work."

"Why, he has only one shoe of yours on his feet."

"That's all right. Your scheme didn't work, 'cause I was watching you. You're a skin, that's what you are."

"Did I try to run away?"

"You didn't dare to, 'cause I was too quick, and now you're trying to bluff me, but it won't work."

"You're a fool!" cried Jack, getting mad, a thing which rarely happened with him.

"Oh, I am, eh? Well, I ain't so easily taken in as you may think when you get in the station house."

"You'll be in the lunatic asylum first," retorted Jack. "See here, this pair of shoes is a perfect fit and I was going to buy them, but now that you're so cranky, I'll see you in Jersey before I buy even a shoe-string of you."

With that Jack took off the shoes he had bought and put on his own again.

Just then the door was pushed violently open, and the boss was sent flying over a low sofa where people sat when trying on shoes.

Then Gloon came hopping in on one foot, holding the new shoe in his hand.

"Clare to goodness, Marse Jack, I neber could weah dat shoe nohow," he cried, as he sat down.

Just then the two clerks came in, puffing and snorting, having taken the wrong direction and missed the little coon entirely.

The boss picked himself up, and then Jack tossed Gloon his other shoe and said:

"Get into the gunboat, pard, and get out of here. They're altogether too polite to suit my time."

"Isn't yo' gwine to get a paih of shoes, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon, putting on his other shoe.

"No, sir, not in this place. They call us skins."

"Did de boss do dat, Marse Jack?" sputtered Gloon, finishing the lacing of his clog.

"Yes."

"Fo' two cents I bust him in de jaw," and the angry little fellow looked fierce enough to try it.

"Just because I played off a joke on my friend, you have to get



your mad up and call us skins," continued Jack, "and this is all I did," and he set off one of the caps in plain sight of everybody.

One of the clerks whispered something to the boss, and as Jack started for the door he said:

"Can't I sell you anything this evening, sir?"

He was awfully affable, but Jack had gotten his mad up, and wasn't going to take it down again.

"You might sell me the boss for a first-class idiot," he retorted, "but I ain't buying dime museum freaks this evening. Good-night, old Pepperbox."

"I'd jes' like to gub yo' one undah de ear, Marse Shoestore," said Gloon, "but I'se 'fraid ob gettin' dirt on my han's. Good-evenin', yo' ol' crank, I'll see yo' at yo' funeral."

Then both boys bounced out, leaving the boss as mad as a March hare at having lost two good customers.

"Some folks don't know when they are well off," muttered Jack.

"Ob co'se dey don't, Marse Jack, an' I jes' wish yo'd let me hit him once."

"It was funny to see you go flying out of that door, anyhow," laughed Jack, beginning already to get over his mad fit.

"Golly! I tort I war a gone niggah, sure 'nuff, till I seed you wasn't comin', and den dat little shoe done trip me up, an' I yanked it off an' come back dere."

Then he laughed at his own fright, and Jack joined him, so that in a few minutes both were in good humor once more and chatted as they walked on as merry as two crickets.

"Whar am yo' gwine to sleep to-night, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon, presently.

"Don't know; but I suppose it's as well to find that out now as at any time. Let's look for a hotel."

"Ya, ya! You specs dey lets me sleep in a hotel, Marse Jack?" laughed the coon. "Dey fiah me out, I specs, 'cause I'se a col'd boy. Guess I hab to paint mysef white, aftah all, to go along wif you, 'less I says I'se yo' wally."

Presently, however, they came to a big four-story building used as a low-priced lodging house, where the two could get a room together for half a dollar.

"This is our hotel," said Jack, as he went in, followed by the coon.

"Gorry, dis am away up."

"Will you show us a room," said Jack, as he put down his half-case.

"Will yez register?" said the clerk.

"Certainly," and Jack took the pen, twirled the big book on the desk around, and wrote:

"Hon. Jack Ready, from Nowhere.

"Senor Don Patricio Gloon, Havana."

"Is the naygur's name Pat?" asked the clerk in surprise.

"Sh! You must not call him a nigger," whispered Jack. "He is a Cuban gentleman, traveling in disguise."

"Sure, he looks for all the wurruld loike a Thompson street coon."

"Oh, no; he's a great lord, but he objects to making a show."

"Faix, he's a whole show in himself wid that big mouth an' the tiny feet av him. Yez'll have to go upstairs wan at a toime, for there'll be no room for ye alongside him on the landings."

Then they were shown to their room, which was next to the roof and exceedingly airy.

"Golly, dis am away up, too," laughed Gloon, when the clerk had gone out. "Dey couldn' put us up any hiah, yo' don' s'pose?"

"Not unless they let out balloons—but I guess this will do."

There were two beds in the room—one each for our travelers, and it was not long before the coon was fast asleep and snoring.

Jack, however, was still awake, and, as usual, thinking of some dandy snap to work off upon his dusky comrade.

Waiting till Gloon had fallen asleep, Jack got up, took his own clothes and stuffed them with pillows, bed-spreads and blankets, making quite a natural-looking figure of them.

Then he stuck his hat on top, and with a piece of stout twine hung the figure from the transom of the door right in plain sight of the coon when he should awake.

Then he crawled under his own bed and began to kick and yell, and make a noise sufficient to arouse a much heavier sleeper than the little nig.

"Wha' de mattah, Marse Jack?" cried Gloon, starting up, and then Jack kept quiet.

There was just enough light in the room to show that suspended figure, and Gloon's eyes opened wide as he beheld it.

"Fo' Gawge! Who am dat?" he muttered. "Say, Marse Jack, somebody am in de room."

There was no answer except a groan.

"Hallo, Marse Jack! What am de mattah?"

Then the little coon jumped up and ran over to Jack's bed.

He saw at once that it was unoccupied, and then he gave another look at the figure hanging from the door.

His eyes bulged out like onions, his hair stood on end, and his knees shook till they rattled.

"Oh, Lawd! Marse Jack done hang hisself! Fo' massy sakes, wha' dis po' chile do now?"

Then he began to cry and wring his hands, and cut up all sorts of shines till Jack gave another groan from under the bed.

"Goodness sakes! What a fool I is," cried Gloon, putting the brakes on his weeping. "Marse Jack amn't dead yet an' heah I is doin' nuffin' fo' to help him."

Then he bounced across the room, grabbed the figure around the waist and gave it a yank.

If it had been Jack, for a fact, that yank would have settled his case forever.

As it was, however, the effigy came in two in the middle, and down sat Gloon on the floor with force enough to make his teeth chatter.

Then Jack crawled out from under the bed and said with a grin: "Well done, old man. You're a boss life-saver, you are."

For a minute Gloon looked at the clothes and then at Jack, until finally the truth dawned upon him.

Then he got up, yanked down the rest of the figgre, kicked the whole business under the bed in great disgust, and said, angrily:

"Yo' 'm de meanes' boy in de hull city, dat's wha' yo' am! I neber spoke to yer ag'in, neber."

Jack only laughed, got up, tickled Gloon in the ribs, and said:

"Bully good snap, wasn't it, old man?"

"G'way f'om me, boy; don' yo' neber say nuffin' mo' ter me. I shook yo' fo' eber."

"You'd make a nice fellow to save my life, wouldn't you?" laughed Jack. "That yank you gave would have broken by neck for a certainty."

"Don' keer, wisher had now, 'clar' to glory I does. Yo' am meaner dan de dirt in de street, yo' ain't got no 'spect fo' nobody, yo' hasn't."

The little coon was full of grief and despair when he thought Jack had hanged himself, but now he was mad enough to chew railroad iron.

"Won' spoke to yo' no mo'," he sputtered.

"What are you doing now?"

"Wal, I won' do so no mo', neber."

"I say, Gloony?" asked Jack, after a pause.

"Wal, wha' yo' want?"

"Thought you weren't going to speak to me."

"No mo' I is. Don't talk to me."

"I say, Gloon?"

"Wal?"

"Don't you wish that had been the cobbler?"

Then Gloon began to giggle.

"Or the Jew that tried to swindle us out of our wages?"

"Fo' Gawge, dat'd be fus' rate."

"Or the boss in the tooth pulling shop, eh, Cooney?"

"By gum! I neber pull him down ef he hang dere fo' a week," laughed the moke.

"Or the proprietor of the museum where you played the wild man?"

Then Gloon rolled over on the bed and laughed till the tears came.

"'Clar' to gracious, Marse Jack, yo' am de worstest boy I eber see," and then he howled with mirth.

"But I say, Gloon, old man," said Jack, suddenly.

"What am dat?"

"I thought you weren't going to speak to me ever again."

"G'long wif youse. I war on'y funnin', but don't yo' play no sech trick on me again. I war mos' scared out ob my wits. Yo' isn't gwine to hang yo'se'f, am yo'?" he added, seriously.

"It'll be a cold day when I do, you can assure yourself, and now suppose we go to sleep."

Thus they did forthwith, though Jack had to laugh again over the snap, and Gloon beat him in getting asleep by a good half hour.

Leaving the lodging house the next morning, the boys found a decent restaurant where they had their breakfast, and then Jack proposed that they look for a job.

"Don' yo' specs dere is lots o' fellahs out ob wo'k, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon.

"I imagine there is."

"An' all lookin' fo' a place?"

"Maybe so."

"Den what chance does we stan', seein' as we is strangers to de city?"

"Don't worry, my boy, I'll find a place to suit before long."

"An' yo' git one fo' me, too, Marse Jack?"

"Certainly."

"Dat am good."

"Here's a fellow that don't seem to be dead stuck on getting a job," remarked Jack. "Just take a look at him."

A full-fledged specimen of the genus vagabond, species tramp,



division bum, stood on the edge of the curb a few paces away, gazing abstractedly up the street.

His garments were picturesquely dirty, romantically ragged, and most marvelously arranged.

His spider-web coat was held together by snap-and-catch-'em clothespins, his trousers were held in place by a rope, his hat was most decidedly of the crush variety, shirt he had none, and his boots had windows in the heels and toes to admit of a free current of air.

He was totally innocent of gloves, cravat or handkerchief; his face had not felt the touch of a razor for weeks, and the months had passed since the shears had dallied with his ambrosial locks.

In one hand he held a very aged and weather-beaten tomato can, which looked as if it had seen service in many a campaign and ought to be put on the retired list.

His gaze was directed up the street to where, midway in the block, stood a pile of beer kegs in front of a saloon.

His desire was evidently to sample the dregs in the aforesaid kegs, but just at that moment the boss of the same was on deck.

"Here's a chance for a racket," whispered Jack, when he and Gloom had taken in the tramp.

"Am he alive? He don' move."

"He'd get a move on him pretty sudden if a copper were to come waltzing along this way. Wait till you see me put life in him."

"Wha' yo' gwine ter do?"

"Get around on the other side of him without attracting his attention, and kneel on your hands and knees."

"All right, Marse Jack."

Then Jack walked on till he came in front of the tramp, when he suddenly paused and stared the bum full in the face.

"Great Scott! When did the Wandering Jew come to town?"

The tramp got over his fit of abstraction in a hurry and looked at Jack.

"I wonder what wind blew this thing in?" continued Jack, meditatively. "Looks as if it had had a long voyage."

Then he stood and gazed at that mess-grown tramp as one might admire some strange animal in a congress of curiosities.

The tramp evidently did not like to have Jack's gaze fixed upon him so closely and he returned it with anything but politeness.

By this time Gloom was crouching on the edge of the curb, just behind the wandering refugee.

He had on a grin on his ebony mug that would put the proverbial Cheshire cat to shame, and he had a big contract in keeping in the laughter that was inside.

"Who're yer lookin' at, young feller?" growled the tramp.

"That's what I am in doubts about. You might be Charlie Ross or Julius Caesar or anybody almost."

"Don't yer give me none o' your guff, or I'll lamm yer in the teeth."

Then the tramp raised his hand threateningly and gave Jack a regular thunder cloud glare.

"Go soak your feet and get some sense," laughed Jack. "For two pins I'd put the diagram of the Brooklyn Bridge on your dirty face."

"Get out, yer muff, or I'll paralyze yer."

"Go take a walk or you'll want to send for an ambulance."

"Ah!"

"Ah!"

That's what they both said, as they stood glaring at each other, each bending forward with one fist half raised.

The tramp saw that Jack had more spunk in him than he supposed, and hesitated to strike for fear the boy's friends might be within easy call.

Jack hesitated only because he didn't have a good show as yet. Presently he got it, the tramp half starting back.

"Get out, you loafer!" he cried, as he raised his fist. "For two cents I'd slug you."

"You ain't man enough," growled the tramp.

"I'm not, eh? What's this?"

## CHAPTER IX.

As Jack said his last say to the tramp he leaned forward and struck him a stunner in the chest.

The tramp staggered backward, fell over Gloom and went sprawling into the gutter.

His hat went one way, his can another, while he turned a twisting somersault that would have done credit to a champion athlete.

He fell on his back in the mud, and for a few moments was the most broken-up tramp ever seen.

Then he jumped to his feet with vengeance in his eye.

He meant to paralyze that saucy young fellow and teach him to play no more tricks on travelers.

The little coon who had been acting the part of stumbling block with such success, got up a few moments ahead of his victim.

"Hook it!" cried Jack.

Gloom stirred his stumps down the street as fast as he could hoof it.

Jack did the same in the opposite direction, allowing no daisies to grow under his feet.

When the tramp got up, he looked around in a dazed sort of fashion, in search of his enemy.

Then he realized that there had been two of them, the snap being plain to him now.

He was in a dilemma, however, for, if he chased one, the other would get away.

So he stood for a few moments in bewilderment, wondering which way to run.

Meanwhile both boys were making the best use of their legs.

The wanderer realized that if he stood there debating much longer, both boys would get away from him.

Then he started up the street after Jack, whom he regarded as the ringleader in the affair.

"By George! How he did go flying," laughed Jack, as he ran. Hallo! Here he comes now," as he looked over his shoulder.

By this time he had nearly reached the beer saloon where the pile of empty kegs stood which had tempted that gentleman of leisure.

He suddenly stopped and pretended to have hurt his foot so that he could not run.

"I'm after you, confound you!" hissed the tramp, putting on a spurt.

Jack waited just long enough to let the tramp get under a full head of steam when he yanked a keg off that pile as quick as a wink.

Then he proceeded to juggle with that keg, sending it rolling full tilt toward the tramp.

Having done this he overturned the whole pile and sent them rolling in all directions.

"Second battle of the kegs," laughed Jack, as he hurried on.

The tramp, going at full speed, was unable to stop until the keg reminded him forcibly of its existence by striking him in the shins.

Down he went, landing on his stomach on a second keg which chanced to come his way.

Now a keg will roll when thrown upon its side and this one was no exception to the rule, though the tramp took decided exceptions to the roll.

Away went the keg, obeying natural laws, while the tramp cleaned up the walk with his nose before he rolled off the keg.

Then another keg came wandering along his way and bumped against his head with no gentle touch.

"Thunder and blazes! It's a regular bombardment," remarked the tramp.

The reader must not suppose that the boss of the beer shop was unmindful of the circus among his kegs.

He was up to the times in that respect, and hearing the racket, came out in a hurry.

Bad boys had been known to overthrow his keg pyramid before this, and he naturally supposed that they were at this work again.

So he came hurrying out just as the tramp was stopped by the rolling keg.

"Py shiminies! I proke dose poys' heads once already," he muttered.

Then the last of the rolling kegs took him from behind and knocked him flat.

He fell across the tramp just as the latter was about to arise.

"Ugh!" grunted the man of leisure, as the Dutchman sat lown on his spine.

"Py shiminies! Vat vas dot?" cried the Dutchman.

"Get off!" yelled the tramp.

"Vat for you dribs me up once?" cried the Dutchman.

Then he picked himself up and surveyed the scattered kegs.

"Vat pusiness you have to drow dem kaigs down mit me once?" he asked, wrathfully.

"Didn't," muttered the bum, getting up.

"I vas a liar, vas you, hum?" sputtered the Dutchman. "I breaks your chaw, maybe, off I gets some sass von you already."

"Oh, go stand on your head!" growled the tramp, as he started to go.

"I stood me on your own head already, you Irish loafer."

"Who's Irish?" snarled the tramp.

"Dot I found me oud once pretty gwick," and Dutchy grabbed the man by the coat-collar and proceeded to shake him.

That collar was not constructed to stand any such funny business as that.

Consequently it parted company with the coat and remained in the Dutchman's hands.

He had more on his hands than a torn coat collar, however.

He had a full blown and very muscular tramp besides.

"Tear my clothes, eh?" cried the vagrant, as he swung around and threw out his fist.



It struck just below the Dutchman's red nose, and plastered his big moustache against his teeth.

Then it made a voyage of discovery further up, landing right between the Dutchman's eyes.

Contrary to rule, the left hand of the tramp seemed to know what the right hand was doing, and it now joined in the fracas.

"It took the Dutchman under the ear with force enough to knock him off his feet.

"There, old man, don't you go fooling with my wardrobe again, or you may get hurt."

So saying the fellow tramped off, keeping his eye peeled for cops. One peeler at a time was all that tramp cared to encounter.

Meanwhile Jack had dodged around a corner, made the circuit of the block and had come up with Gloom.

"Did you see his nibs?" asked Jack.

"No, sah, I hab oder business to look aftah."

"Well, he's gone up the street, so I guess we're all right."

"How dat feller did go flyin' ober me!" laughed the coon.

"Golly! Neber had so much fun since I had the cholera."

"What do you say to looking for a job now that we've had our fun?"

"Don' car' ef I do, Marse Jack. Specs we'se got to do suffin' fo' a libin', but de easier it is de better, provided de pay is good."

"H'm, you're an aristocrat."

"Ain't nudder. I'se a 'publican, an' allus was. Guess I knows which side my hoeecake am greased, Marse Jack."

"You are laboring under a misapprehension, my colored voter and friend," laughed Jack, "but it is all right. I said aristocrat, not democrat."

"Oh, did yer? Am dat de name ob de new party, Marse Jack?"

"No, it's older than any of the others, but as you don't appear to connect, suppose we look for a job?"

"Golly, Marse Jack, yo' am all de time lookin' out for dem, so's to wo'k 'em off on somebody."

"Well, I don't mean that sort of a job now; I mean a situation."

Then they started down the street, and after walking nearly a mile, Jack saw a notice in a big dry goods store, which read:

#### "BOYS WANTED."

"That's our huckleberry, my African friend," he said, gleefully. "Here's a chance. Boys are wanted in this place."

"Does yo' fink dey would took me, Marse Jack?"

"If they don't they won't have me, I can tell you, for we are partners and always travel together."

"Don' yo' go to givin' up a good job long o' me, Marse Jack, kas I won' hab it. If dey wants yo' an' don' want me, jes' yo' took de place an' leabe me to shif' fo' myself. Reckon I kin fin' suffin'."

"No, sir, it's either both of us or neither, so make up your mind to that."

"A' right, Marse Jack, go ahead."

Then they entered the store and were met by a dudish floor walker, gotten up in the latest agony, who inquired their business.

"My friend and I want a situation," answered Jack, removing his hat.

"Aw, I suppose you two are brothahs?" said the man, inquiringly.

"No," said Jack, quickly, "but I saw your brother not long ago."

"But I have no brothah, sah."

"Well, the resemblance was very striking, and you would say so if you saw him."

"Wheah did you see the gentleman you took for my brothah?"

"In the monkey's cage in a dime museum," answered Jack, soberly.

The dude colored, would have bitten his moustache if it had been long enough, and then got mad, not having sense enough to see that he had met his match.

"We don't want you in the stoah," he snapped. "We only take respectable young gentlemen, not tramps."

"Are you the proprietor?" asked Jack, politely.

"I represent him, sah, and that is your answah. You can go!" was the angry retort.

"We isn't gwine till we see de boss, sah," spoke up Gloom, an' we habn't no use fo' de po'tah, 'tall."

"I am not the portah, sah. I am the floah walkah, if you please."

"Den walk away f'om heah, sah, 'cause we don' wan' yo' 'tall."

Jack grinned at this evidence of spunk on the coon's part, and at that moment a pleasant-looking old gentleman came up and said:

"What is it, Brown? Can't you direct the young gentlemen?"

The dude was about to speak, when Jack stepped forward and said respectfully:

"We are looking for work, sir, my friend and myself, and seeing the notice at the door, determined to call upon you."

"What is your name?"

"Jack Ready, sir."

"And your age?"

"Nearly eighteen."

"That is rather old for a cash boy."

"I would not mind taking a clerk's position," said Jack, quickly. "I have sold goods before."

"Where?" asked the merchant, smiling.

Just then a richly-dressed lady, of middle age, entered the store, and the dude floor-walker flew to wait upon her.

The lady glanced at Jack, seemed to change color for a moment, and then passed on to the rear of the store, accompanied by the dude.

"In the 'country," returned Jack in answer to the merchant's question.

"A dry goods store?"

"They sold everything from pickles to prints, from sugar to silk, and from bacon to brocades."

"What was the proprietor's name?"

"Hunter."

"Ah! Not from Stamford?"

"Yes."

"He is a customer of ours, for we do a wholesale as well as retail trade. Did he send you here?"

"No, sir. I came of my own accord. In fact, I did not know that you sold him goods."

"Do you think you can sell goods to city customers?"

"I can at least try."

"Have you any references?"

"I am unknown in the city."

"Well, it is not customary to take young men of whom we know nothing, but then, I like your face and shall trust you."

"Thank you, sir," said Jack. "I will try and prove myself worthy of the trust."

"If you do, I will engage you permanently, and in the meantime, will take you on trial for a week."

"Thank you, sir, and my young friend?"

"Yas'r, habn't yo' got suffin' fo' me, sah?" asked Gloom, stepping up. "I'se little, but I'se used to wo'k, sah."

The merchant smiled at sight of the comical little coon, and asked:

"What can you do, my boy?"

"Open de do', run arrands, show de ladies to deir carriages, tol' 'em whar to go an' do ebery'ing."

"He has been used to service, sir, and I can recommend him," said Jack, quickly. "I will be responsible for his good behavior and honesty."

"That is sufficient," said the merchant. "Anyone that you will recommend cannot be far out of the way. I want a page and your friend will do first rate."

Mr. Cotton, the dry goods merchant, then engaged Jack as an assistant salesman and Gloom to attend the door, and, after looking for a boarding place and fixing up their wardrobes a bit, the two friends entered upon their new duties.

As they came into the store again the lady that had looked at Jack came out and entered a carriage standing at the curb.

Again she gazed intently at the boy for an instant, and this time Jack could not help but notice it.

However, the carriage drove off and Jack had no time to think of the matter, simply wondering what there was about him to attract the notice of such an elegant person as the lady in the carriage.

Our friends now went to work, Jack assisting one of the older salesmen and being instructed by him, while Gloom opened the door for customers, and sometimes ran errands for the proprietor and chief clerks.

Jack had not forgotten the slight which Brown, the floorwalker, had put upon him in the morning, and he made up his mind to take that dude down a number of pegs before many days passed.

The opportunity came sooner than he had looked for.

It was late in the afternoon and there were many people in the store, Jack being kept busy handing down and putting away boxes for the salesman he was with, besides doing up parcels, calling cash boys, delivering bundles, and the like.

There had just been a sale of linen garments, and the counter was pretty well strewn with goods, Jack being engaged in putting things to rights, when up sailed Brown and began talking to the salesman.

"So you have a new helpah, Mr. Robbins?" he said, turning his back upon and utterly ignoring Jack.

"Yes," said Robbins.

"I suppose he thinks he is a very smart fellah, eh, Robbins? These country boys do, I heah."

"He'll do," said Robbins, disliking to pursue the subject while Jack was about.

"Thinks he'll be the proprietah in a few yeahs, no doubt. Really, the impudence of these fellahs is stupenjous."

"Oh, no, I guess not."

"Boys are baws always, me deah fellah, and must be kept undah. Keep this lout hard at work, Robbins, and make him learn the



respect due to his superiahs, which he seems to be ignorant of at present. If he troubles you, as I infaw he will, do not hesitate to make a complaint."

"I have no reason to do so at present, Mr. Brown."

"Ah, but you will in the fuchaw, I do not doubt."

Of course Jack had heard all this gratuitous insulting language, but had kept right on at work.

Just then, however, a party of ladies came in, and away hurried Brown to give them his sweetest smiles, best bows and silliest smirk.

Not before Jack had succeeded, however, in pinning a little infant's shirt to his coat tails, which had almost swept the counter as he stood talking to Robbins.

Off he went down the aisle, that baby's undergarment hanging conspicuously from his black coat-tails.

The clerks he passed grinned as they saw it, ladies smiled, cash boys giggled, and yet he kept right on, unmindful of everything.

"Guess Brown must think of getting married," laughed one boy.

"Look at the lugs he puts on with that tag on his coat."

"Somebody will be tearing mad when he finds it out."

"Serves him right, anyhow, for being so lippy."

Brown, still displaying the infantile draperies on his coat, now approached the ladies and said:

"What department, ladies?"

"Wraps," said one.

"This way, if you please," returned Brown, as he reversed march and stalked pompously down the aisle.

"Here comes the flag of truce."

"Ought to hang a hoopskirt on him instead of that."

"Or a pair of corsets tied with blue ribbons."

These comments were whispered, of course, and Brown did not hear them.

He did hear a great deal of tittering and suppressed laughter, however, particularly from the very party of ladies he was escorting.

"I wonder if he knows it?"

"Dear me, Elsie, I shall scream."

"And just see his airs, too."

"It's as funny as a comic opera."

Mr. Floorwalker Brown heard these last remarks and began to suspect that something was wrong.

As he passed the various departments the laughter increased, and he heard remarks which he knew could only apply to him.

"What dizzy coat-tails Brown wears."

"When was Brown made a walking show-room?"

"Why doesn't he carry the whole outfit?"

Nearly everybody in the store had caught on to the exhibition, and were laughing at him.

At last he passed Mr. Cotton, who saw the baby's shirt, stopped the pompous fellow by yanking vigorously at his coat-tails, and said, in a hoarse whisper:

"Are you aware, sir, that you are making a fool of yourself? Take that thing off at once."

The yank had been too much for Brown, the floors being of hard wood and very slippéry.

He lost his balance, went over backwards and sat down with considerable more celerity than dignity.

Then the laughter broke out afresh and could be heard all over the store.

Brown got up and caught a glimpse of himself in a big mirror at the end of the store, about ten feet away.

He caught on to the snap at once, and yanked that piece of youthful apparel off his coat in an instant.

His spirit was crushed, however, for he knew that a whole storeful of people had been laughing at him, and that took all the gloss out of his bangs.

He was tolerably certain, too, that Jack Ready had worked the job off on him, and he felt as sick as when he smoked too many cigarettes.

And the worst part of the whole business was that he could not say a word.

Jack had only retaliated upon him for his ungentlemanly conduct, and if he complained to Cotton, the whole thing would come out.

He consequently slunk away, very much abashed, and did not show himself for fully half an hour.

"I guess I'm square on the dude," laughed Jack to Robbins, "and it's very frosty weather when the Rolling Stone fails to come to time."

## CHAPTER X.

Jack Ready's little joke at the expense of the foppish floorwalker, Mr. Brown, gained him many friends in the retail dry goods establishment of Cotton & Co., and his stock began to rise at once.

Brown had never been a favorite on account of his domineering

ways, his foppishness, his vanity and his general toadyism, and anyone who could get the best of him was considered a trump.

Everybody except Brown knew who had worked off the racket on him, but they all kept quiet about it, and the floorwalker was forced to make the best of it.

He may have suspected Jack, for he treated that young gentleman with the utmost consideration after that, though Jack acted just the same as though he had not.

Our hero had struck a good job and he seemed to know it, and to feel also that being a Rolling Stone was not the highest aim in life, and that it was best to settle down.

Gloom liked nothing better than being rigged out in smart livery, opening the door to swell ladies out shopping, and running an occasional errand for the boss.

"Marse Jack gettin' stiddy dese days," he would sometimes remark to himself, "an' we don' hab no mo' fun, but I reckon we're better off dan when we're trampin' froo de country."

If he thought that Jack had given up having fun, however, he was mistaken, for although Jack did not indulge in so many pranks as before, he had not forgotten how to work off a good snap, by any means.

The boys had been in their new situation about six weeks and winter was nearly passed, when one mild, pleasant day, they were on their way to dinner in company, as usual, when Jack espied a Jew peddler with a pack on his back, coming along the street.

"Get on to the traveling dry goods store," he said to Gloom. "Do you want to see some fun?"

"Clar' to goodness, Marse Jack, I've done got rusty fo' not havin' suffin' to laugh at. 'Pears to me yo' 'm a diff'ent boy sense yo' come to New York."

"Oh, there's lots of fun in me yet, Coony, though I must say it hasn't had much vent lately."

"Wha' yo' gwine to do wif de Sheeny man, Marse Jack?"

"Watch me," and Jack walked up to the approaching Israelite and said:

"Got any soap, Isaac?"

"Ya, mein friend, I vos got some off der best soap efer made, und so sheap dot you could buy a barrel off dot und not shpend so much money as you shpends mit beer und cigars in a week."

"Will it wash?"

"Vill it vash? Mein friend, vat you get soap for vunce, off it don't vash? To black der shtoves mit?"

"Suppose the thing is awfully dirty?"

"I don't care off der t'ing vas so black like der shtove-pipe, dot soap vas vash it so clean like der vit vash on der vall. Yust let your colored friend try dot soap vunce, und to-morrow morning he was yust as whiter as yourselluf."

"Let me see some of it."

"Ya, mein friend, I show you dot soap und some oder dings already. Wouldn't you like a pair off soxpenders, a sillik handkerchief, a pair of kit gloves, or—"

"Let me see the soap first."

Then the Jew put his pack on the sidewalk, opened it and displayed his stock in trade.

"Dere vas der best soap dot ever vent onto der market," he said, holding up a small cake of scented soap.

"How much?"

"Five cents, six for a kevarter. Off you use dot soap you don't could have freckles, bimples, ringworms or any off dose dings."

"You guarantee it to be good?"

"Mein freund, off you vas to svear me before efery shudge in der city, I told you efery dime dot soap vas feirst-class."

"Wash anything?"

"Vash anythings! Vy, so hellup me Moses, off der street-gleaning department use dot soap vunce, der bavements vas been so vite dot you could eat your dinner mit der middle off der road."

"And cheap, too?"

"Sheap! Vy, I dakes my oat' dot a gross of dot soap costs you less dan you pay to go to der teayter vunce, und you don't vas look oxt extravagant."

"Well, then," said Jack, with a grin, "since it's so cheap and so good, and will wash anything clean, no matter how dirty, I wonder you don't use it on your own face occasionally, for it needs washing bad enough."

Then that jolly joker passed on, leaving the peddler to smother his wrath and pack up his duds as best he might.

"Vash my face!" he yelled after Jack. "Off I get my hands on you, mein loafer freund, I don't leaf so much off your face to vash as you vas hold mit tree fingers. Vash my face! So hellup me Abraham, off I tought you vas made a sucker off me like dot I break your nose afore efer I goes to all dot troubles. Vash my face! Veepin' Rebecca mit der vell, yust vait off I catch you vunce mit Ludlow street, I puts you on dot island putty kwick, so hellup me Shacob."

But Jack was far away before the irate Israelite had half finished this tirade and so it was lost on him.

Passing along the street Jack presently saw a sorry-looking



Chinaman leaning against a lamp-post and staring around vacantly as though he had lost his bearings.

"Wait till you see me juggle with John Chinaman," laughed Jack.

"Wha' yo' do wif 'um, Marse Jack?"

"You go ahead, get behind him and while I keep him chinning, tie his back hair to the post. I see that he wears it down."

If that Mongolian had not been somewhat bewildered, owing to having partaken too freely of rice brandy, or some other Asiatic drink, he would have known better than to have kept his pigtail down in a city like New York.

A dangling queue is a great temptation to the small boy of the metropolis, and even the bigger ones, are not always proof against its allurements.

Gloon walked boldly past the contemplative Chinaman without giving him a look, and seemingly unconscious of his presence.

He paused, however, as soon as he saw John Chinaman's back, and then Jack came up smiling.

"Good morning, John," he said blandly, as he dropped anchor in front of the Celestial.

"Goo' mo'nin', 'self, no sabe Melican boy," muttered the other.

"How's the washing business, John?"

"Me no washee, me sellee newspapee."

"So so, you've gone up a step higher, have you?"

"Yeppe; no shuggee in washee; no makee nuff to feed canaly bird."

"Well, how do you make out selling papers?"

"Velly bad, no goodee dat, bad bloy hooke, lun alay, thlow stone, hittee in eye, cause wantee sell papee 'self."

"So they interfere with your business, do they?"

"Yep. Ilish bloy, 'talian bloy, Dutchee bloy no likee John sell papee, boycott he, go on stlike, stlikee John in headee with blick bat."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Me no sabe; callee coppee, him tellee me go West go washee collee; oder Chineeman say, no washee no mo', go sellee papee."

By this time Gloon had taken a double clove hitch around the lamp-post with the Chinaman's queue.

This was Jack's cue then, the darky giving him the wink.

"Oh, I guess you're no good anyhow," he said, scornfully.

"Me heap bettee lan Ilishman."

"No, you ain't; you're no good at all."

"So be, me lickee Melican boy, so be him givve sass."

"Pooh, you couldn't lick a fly," and Jack snapped his fingers under John's nose.

"No makee me mad. Me fight likee bluiser. Me gettee closs one time."

"Bosh, you can't frighten me with a fire-cracker. What do you think of that, John?"

Then Jack pulled John's nose till he yelled.

No well-regulated Chinaman would stand such an insult a minute.

As Jack jumped back grinning, John flew at him like a goat at a crouching boy.

He didn't get there, however, by at least two feet.

The captive queue yanked him back and nearly took him off his feet.

He recovered and started the other way, seeing Gloon laughing at him.

"Melican bloy makee blackee velly klick. Me makee nose led allee samee klick, so be me catchee."

"Don' yo' wish yo' could, Marse Chinyman?" laughed Gloon, twirling his fingers at the end of his nose.

"Me sluggee, punchee eye, blackee nose," sputtered John.

Then he made another dash but again he was fetched up all standing, and tried to sit down.

The only thing that prevented him was the length of his queue, which only allowed him to fall on his knees and not to sit down.

"Whatttee mattee! Dashee pig-tail go clazy, hap."

Then he got on his feet and staggered around to the other side of the post.

Here he found Jack grinning at him like a basket of chips.

"How are you, John?" laughed the Rolling Stone.

"What gottee me, no sabe?" muttered the pagan, twisting around.

Then he caught sight of his pigtail tied to the post, and got very unreasonably mad.

"Melican bloy allee samee like lotten egg, no goodee. Me lickee one time; me makee loose pigee-tail."

He began unfastening it, when Jack planted his foot against the superfluity of his baggy breeches and gave him a push forward.

"Ow! Pullee hair like blazes; stoppe, no likee!" he yelled, as he shot past the post and was brought up with a round turn.

"Don' yo' like it, Marse Chinyman?" laughed Gloon, as he bestowed another push on the hapless heathen and sent him spinning back whence he came.

Jack laughed to see the Chinaman's antics and sent him back to Gloon again, as though he had been a tennis ball and they were

having rackets with him, a pastime he seemed neither to court nor love, as it played the deuce with him and did not conduce to his vantage.

Just then Jack stole a backward glance over his shoulder and said hurriedly:

"Cheese it, Black-and-tan, there's a copper coming."

Then both boys sailed away under a full load of canvas, leaving the poor Chinaman to rescue himself from the toils or be dragged ignominiously away by the majesty of the law, represented by a pot-bellied policeman with more buttons than brains.

"Golly, Marse Jack, I mos' bus' myse'f laffin' to see dat headen Chinyman go bobbin' back an' for'ard like a ball," chuckled Gloon, as he waltzed along by Jack's side.

"Do you think the rust is beginning to wear off now?" asked Jack, with a grin.

"Lor' sakes, Marse Jack! I begin to feel like a new pusson a'ready. I habn't had a good laff afo' fo' a monf, an' it am jiss like ol' times to see yo' playin' dem yer tricks ag'in."

"Well, I don't think I've forgotten the knack of it, my colored friend."

"No, sah, yo' am jes' as good fo' habin' fun as yo' eber was," and the little coon laughed till the tears ran down his ebony cheeks.

Presently they saw approaching them a human shipwreck in the shape of a tramp, and a darky tramp at that, who looked as if he did not care any more for work than a cow for kittens.

"There's your long lost brother, Gloon," said Jack, indicating the tramp with a wave of his thumb.

"G'long wif youse, Marse Jack, I neber looked like dat fellah in all my bo'n days, I neber did."

"You've both got the same complexion."

"Don' car' ef we hab, dat's nuffin'. Didn' yo' hab de same colah as de tramp we met toder day, an' youse no 'lotion ob his'n, is yo'?"

"Wait till you see some fun," replied Jack, glancing down the street.

The darky tramp had just passed a little Italian who was grubbing in a big ash barrel and who was nearly buried in it, by the way, being engaged in raking up treasures from the depths.

His coarse bag lay on the sidewalk close to the barrel, and every now and then he would straighten up, show his full stature for an instant, deposit something in the bag and then dive into the barrel, nothing below his belt being visible.

As the tramp reached the boys he paused, looked at Gloon, laughed a comical laugh and said:

"Fo' de lan' sakes, ef dere amn't a blacker coon dan I is. Gib a feller critter a few pennies, won' you', honey?"

"G'way, nigger, I don't know yer," said Gloon, scornfully.

"Jess a few pennies, chile, fo' to get a bit o' suffin' to eat."

"Mos' likely yo' wan' it fo' to get gin wif," snorted Gloon.

"You'se a no' 'count nigger, I sees it in yer."

"Well, bress yo' little gizzard, chile, I don' car' ef I do hab some gin, s'long's yo' spoke about it, fo' I hain't had a drap sence last Fo'f July."

"You're a nice fellow to let your chances slip," now chimed in Jack.

"Wha' yo' mean by dat, young ge'man?" asked the black tramp.

"Do you see that fellow grubbing in that ash barrel?"

"Yas'r, I sees him, an' I wouldn' wo'k like dat fo' a hund'ed dollahs, no sah."

"Do you know who that is?"

"No, sah, an' I don' car', nuther."

"Why, that's one of the richest men in the whole city."

"Sho! Why, he don' look no bettah dan I does m'self."

"That's only a blind, so that people won't rob him."

"Yo' don' tol' me."

"Yes, I do. See that bag of his?"

"Yas'r, an' it ain't no mo' account dan he is, I reckon."

"Why, he's never without hundreds of dollars in that bag."

"Lor' sakes!" and the tramp coon's eyes grew as big as saucers in a second.

"Yes, sir, and he lugs it about so that people won't steal it."

"Am dat a fac'?"

"Certainly."

"Golly! Reckon I'd like to cotch hol' o' dat yer bag once."

"That's easy enough."

"How am dat, boss?"

"When he dives into the barrel, just you trip up his heels, freeze on to the bag and dust the best you know how."

"But dat bag mus' be heavy, boss, wif all dat money in it."

"Oh, no; it's in bills."

"Dat's a diffent t'ing, fo' I don' car' to run wif a heavy bag a jumpin' up an' down on my back, nohow."

"Oh, it's quite light, but there's lots of wealth in it all the same."

"Golly, I play policy wif dat, an' bus' de bank, and den won't I cut a swell in Thompson street! G'way, nigger, I'se some account now, I tol' yo'."

Then that big tramp coon retraced his steps and walked carelessly toward the barrel.



The Italian had just dived down to the bottom again, and only his legs and his waistband could be seen.

Averse to work as that tramp moke was, he could not resist the temptation in this instance.

Collaring the Tuscan by his belt, he yanked him up and dumped him into the garbage receptacle in an instant.

Then he annexed the bag and went speeding down the street with it, considerably faster than a walk.

There was a vision of waving feet, a volley of smothered execrations from the barrel and then the whole business fell over upon the walk.

Up jumped from a cloud of dust a very dirty and very mad Italian, who began to rattle off several yards of hand-organ English as fast as his tongue could go.

"Santa Lucia purissima, holy Mos', dasha de whola biz, sacramenta, who stola my baga, work alla day, losa eberyting, cussa de luck."

He jumped and he gesticulated, he dug the ashes out of his eyes, he doubled up his fists, he danced around like a flea in a fit, and wanted to fight the whole town.

"Miserecordia! Alla de day go for notting, hunta de ash fo' sind alla day, miserab' trampa steala de whole biz, no finda cent worth."

"Why don't you chase him?" asked Jack. "There he goes now."

"Data man on de corn', dees one?"

"Yes."

"Sacramento! Killa him," and away went the little Italian at full speed.

"More fun," laughed Jack.

The darky tramp had a heavier load to carry than he thought, for the bag was nearly full of coal, cinders, scraps of iron, bones and other truck that the Italian had collected since early morning.

"Italy against Africa," laughed Jack, "but Africa is handicapped, and has no time allowance."

"Golly! I bet on de nigger ebery time," chuckled Gloom. "Golly! How dem long legs ob his'n do fly, Marse Jack."

"Yes; but the ash-gatherer will catch him for all that."

"Stop-a t'ief! Call-a de cop! Stop-a t'ief!" yelled the Italian. "Give-a half-a dol' catch-a de t'ief!"

Now, that same copper, whose approach had been the signal for Jack's sudden flight after his little lark with the Chinaman, was coming along the street at this very moment.

He had done his duty by clubbing the Mongolian for disturbing the peace, had taken a glass of beer on the sly at the side door of a malt dispensary, and now, in conscious dignity and pride, was mashing all the servant girls in sight and pursuing the even tenor of his way.

His serenity was disturbed by the cries of the Italian, and once more duty called him, and he stepped forward like one of the finest that he was.

The colored tramp with his supposed treasure on his back bore down upon him like a pirate on a man-of-war, and there were rumors of trouble in the air at once.

"Phwere are yez goin' wid the bag?" asked the law, blocking the path of crime.

"Wha' bizness dat ob yourn?" snapped baffled villainy, as it was brought to a sudden pause.

"I'll make it me business, begorrah! Show me phwat's in the bag."

"All right, boss," said the coon, looking over his shoulder hurriedly.

Then he unslung the bag, fetched it around in front of him with a swing, and took the cop in his swell front extension.

Down went the law and then bold villainy hurriedly emptied the bag on its head and made tracks.

The copper was smothered, and made a great outcry as he staggered to his feet and drew his club.

At that moment the Italian came rushing up with such impetuosity, in his inordinate desire to regain his treasure, that he butted right into the watchful guardian of the city's peace, and down he went for a second time, flat on his back.

Italy then gathered up his bag and its scattered contents, and began to make them more nearly acquainted by putting one inside the other.

While he was engaged in this laudable undertaking the cop got on his legs once more.

He knew that the law had been violated and that he had a duty to perform, but he was not very clear in his mind as to how it ought to be done.

Somebody needed a clubbing, that he was sure of, and if the Italian was in for it that was his misfortune, and not the copper's fault.

Italy was busily engaged in bagging his miscellaneous collection, when he got a rap on the head that nearly staggered him.

"Santa Maria! What-a fall down?" he grunted. "What-a for you hit-a me?" he added, as he looked up.

"Begob, I'll hammer the loife out av yez, ye murdherin' thafe," and the billy beat a tattoo on the Italian's ribs.

"Me no t'ief, me good-a man. Policeman club-a niggah, no club-a me."

"Be heavens, it's me juty to club some wan, an' ye're the most convenient," and Italy got another rat-tat-tat on the head.

"Policeman fool, no got sense, haye-a head like a wood man, no sabe nothing."

Having delivered himself of this very correct opinion, the Tuscan gathered himself up, lowered his head and butted the cop so well, that down he went for the third time.

"Golly! Reckon dat 'Talian man am part nigger, aftah all," laughed Gloom. "He butt jes' as good as col'd fellah."

"The cop has Italian butter on his bread now," laughed Jack, "but he does not seem to like it."

Then away hied the Italian, leaving the copper to get up the best way he knew how, while Jack and Gloom, not caring to be the next subjects of the bluecoat's wrath, went on their way rejoicing.

They soon arrived in front of a big hotel on the main avenue, with pillars in front and a broad piazza fenced in with a railing, where on warm days the guests would sit and sun themselves to their heart's content, and as Jack and Gloom came along they saw two old fellows engaged in that pleasing occupation at that very moment.

Each was big and fat and lazy, and each had pre-empted a big, comfortable arm-chair, and now with his head tipped back, his feet on the railing and arms folded, was enjoying a cozy after-dinner nap.

"Twig the snoozers," whispered Jack. "Wait a moment and you'll see some high jinks."

Then he skipped into a neighboring toy-shop and purchased one of those big mechanical spiders with dangling legs, fastened by an elastic cord to the end of a stick.

When he returned he went behind one of the sleepers and began dangling that imitation reptile over his nose by a string, allowing it to touch bottom every second or so.

"He'll get the jams when he sees that," laughed Gloom.

"There'll be a circus the minute he wakes up," chuckled Jack, bouncing the spider plump down on the sleeper's snoring nose, "and if you want to see the fun better secure a seat at once."

## CHAPTER XI.

Those two fat, hearty snoozers sat snoring in their big arm-chairs, and took no thought of the world and its turmoil.

They were comfortable-looking old duffers, wore clothes made to order, shiny black beavers, heavy gold watch chains and an air of genteel respectability.

And yet they snored, though only butchers and drovers and men of that ilk are supposed to indulge in such stertorous ejaculations.

With their feet on the railing, their chairs tipped back and their heads elevated they whiled the time away.

When Jack Ready and his big, fat, dangling spider came upon the scene, however, the prospect changed.

The fellow whose nose Jack was tickling gave a grunt, took a reef in his snore, rubbed his horn, sneezed and went on with his nap.

"Jes' yo' drap it a little closer, Marse Jack," whispered Gloom, who was taking in the show from the sidewalk. "It don' tickle him nuff yet."

Then the spider, at Jack's instigation, crawled all over the sleeper's nose.

Suddenly he awoke with a start and saw some dreadful black mysterious thing dangling right in front of his face.

"Great pussy cats! Is that thing alive?"

That thing made a sudden dive right for his nose.

"Ow! Take it off, drive it away, take it—oh!"

Then he suddenly beheld a big, robust spider dangling in front chair and sat down in a hurry, the chair taking him in the back of the neck.

Jack skipped out of the way, and got in front of one of the big pillars out of sight of both old parties.

The second O. P. was awakened by the noise, and jumped up as quickly as if he had been sitting on the executive department of a carpet tack.

"What the mischief is the matter?" he interrogated of nobody in particular.

Then he suddenly lost his hold on the railing, slipped off his of his proboscis, and evidently contemplating making a meal off it.

"Julius Gimcracks! Where did that thing come from?"

There was no enjoyment in having such a thing in close proximity to his smelling apparatus.

Consequently he backed up so suddenly that there was danger of knocking the pillar over with his head.

Away went his shiny plug, and a lump came on his head as big as a pint cup.



But Jack was on the other side of that pillar, and keeping up his end like a little man.

The spider advanced closer yet to the fat fellow's bugle, and he didn't seem to relish it.

"Ouch! Get out!" he yelled, fairly freezing to the pillar and kicking out vigorously.

The other fellow was still sitting on the piazza floor, slightly mixed up with the chair and considerably puzzled as to how he got there.

Gloon was taking in the fun from his position outside the railing, and was laughing to split.

It was roast possum, green corn, sweet potatoes, and hoe cake to him, and he laughed till there was great danger of his mouth stretching till it would meet around at the back of his head.

He fairly danced with glee at the antics of the two respectable old duffs, and it was alone worth a dollar to see him.

Old Party No. Two backed closer up against that pillar, if that were possible, and nearly kicked his shoes off in his gyrations.

"Ow! I know it's poisonous, I know I'll die if it bites me, drive it away, ouch!"

The spider landed on his nose and the struck at it with his fist. It bounced away, but came back again in another second.

Then the old fellow made a kick at it, and touched the pillar with the toe of his boot.

He was not used to such aerostatic and saltatorial exhibitions, and he lost his grip with his other foot and came down slam-bang on the biggest part of him.

"Ugh! What gave way I'd like to know?"

That was too much for Gloon and he burst one of his suspenders laughing.

"What are you sitting there for, Perkins?" asked the first old party.

"Same reason you are sitting there, I reckon, Hawkins," answered the other.

"Has it bitten you yet?"

"No. Haven't you been bitten?"

"Guess not."

"H'm! I never got such—jumping Jerusalem! There it—ow—wow! Take it away!"

The spider was jumping up and down in the air right in front of his nose again.

Just then Hawkins got up and caught a glimpse of Jack.

Then the whole snap dawned upon him in a twinkling.

He was mad to think that he had been sold so badly, but, for the life of him, he could not help laughing at the antics of Perkins.

"Ha, ha!—ho, ho!—he, he! Never had so much fun since my mother-in-law choked herself with a shad bone! Ho, ho, ho!—ha, ha, ha, haw!"

Oh, yes, it was lots of fun to him, now that he knew how the thing was done.

He laughed till he grew black in the face and ripped off all his vest buttons.

At every fresh pass that Perkins made at that pestiferous spider he gave a fresh guffaw, and laughed till he couldn't speak.

"Oh, yes, you'll laugh, you old fool, but you wouldn't laugh if that horrid, poisonous thing was—scat, you beast!—was about to fasten its—dash the thing; it has the persistence of—fasten its fangs in your—ow! Go away, confound you—in your flesh, and send the poison through—aha! I've killed you at last, you beast!"

Jack himself had been taken with such a fit of laughter that he forgot to keep the spider dangling, and so Perkins had got a chance to hit it a good crack, tear it from its point of suspension and send it flying into a corner.

Then all hands laughed, but Perkins jumped up and planted his big foot on that dangerous insect and scrunched it out of existence in a second.

"Ho, ho! You think you've done something fine, haven't you?" laughed Hawkins. "Just lift your big foot once and see what's under it."

Perkins did so, rather gingerly, however, and surveyed the ruin he had wrought.

There lay a lot of wires, beads, bits of metal and a foot or so of elastic cord.

"Ho, ho! Ain't you afraid it will bite?" laughed Hawkins. "That's worth a couple of bottles, old man."

Perkins examined the wreck and saw what it was, and looked as disgusted as a woman who gets caught out in a rainstorm with her best bonnet on.

"H'm! You were taken in, too, by the same thing, you old fraud," growled Perkins.

"No, sir, I wasn't. I was only fooling."

"Bah! You can't fool me."

"Tell you I knew what it was all the time."

"Get out! You didn't."

"Do you mean to tell me I lie?"

"Pooh! You're an idiot, Hank Hawkins."

"Bah! You're another, Pete Perkins."

"Ah, go smother yourself!"

"You go crawl into a hole and pull it after you!"

"Bah!" puffed Perkins.

"Pooh!" howled Hawkins.

"Ah!" snarled both Perkins and Hawkins.

Then each picked up his hat, banged it on his head and walked off in different directions, as mad as turkey cocks.

"Sho! I tort dere was gwine to be a big fight," muttered Gloon, "and den we'd a had some mo' fun."

"How much do you want for a dime?" asked Jack. "Aren't you satisfied with what you've had?"

"Yas'r, but I war jis' dyin' to see dem two ol' roosters fightin'."

"Pshaw! They'll be friends again before night, when they come to compare notes and get to laughing over the thing."

"Specs dey will, Marse Jack, and dat dey neber had no 'tentions ob fightin'."

"Not the least. They're both big gas-bags, that's all."

The boys now proceeded without further interruption to their boarding house, where they had dinner, and then returned to the store.

"Haven't you been rathah long to your dinnah?" asked Brown, the floorwalker, as Jack came in.

"No longer than usual," answered Jack.

"I think you have, and I shall report you," said the dude, loftily.

"Report and be blowed!" thought Jack.

"Go down in the cellah and cleah away the old stock," said Brown. "You can help the othah portah."

"The other one, eh?" laughed Jack. "So you call me a porter, do you?"

"No remarks, if you please," replied the high and mighty floorwalker.

Jack went away, found Gloon, sent him downstairs, and then went back to his counter.

Presently Brown came along, saw him waiting on a customer, and said, in his most impertinent style:

"I thought I sent you down cellah to help the portah. Why don't you obey ordahs?"

"I do, when Mr. Cotton gives them," said Jack, quietly, "but not from my inferiors."

"Sir!" cried the dude with a gasp. "Do you call me your inferiah?"

"Yes, in intellect," said Jack, and then he went right on attending to his customer, and paid no more attention to Brown than if he had not been within a thousand miles of the place.

Brown saw that Jack was too much for him, and he let him alone, but our hero had it in for the dude all the same.

When six o'clock came, Brown went to the coat-room in the basement to get his things.

There were several of the clerks preparing for home, but Brown was too big a man in his own estimation to bother about speaking to them.

He took down his light spring overcoat from its peg and essayed to put it on.

He got as far as the cuffs, but then he met with an obstruction. The ends of the sleeves were closed up, and there was no travel in that direction.

"It's rathah singulah that I can't put on my top coat without having this twouble," he remarked.

"Maybe it's frozen up, Brown," said one of the salesmen. "The weather has changed."

"Guess the lining is torn and you've gone in at the wrong door."

"I don't wear torn coats," snarled Brown, and then he got out of the garment and began an investigation.

There wasn't much to pay after all, only the sleeves sewed up tight with stout thread.

"I'd like to know who has been taking liberties with my wardrobe," muttered Brown, as he proceeded to rip the stitches with a penknife.

Nobody volunteered any information upon this subject, and Brown got into his coat and went for his high silk dicer.

It lay top down on a stand, looking as innocent as a young alligator.

Brown tried to pick it up, but its weight seemed to have increased to an enormous extent.

It wouldn't come up worth talking about, seeming to prefer staying where it was.

Brown took a look into the interior to see if there were any cannon-balls, dumb-bells, boarding-house biscuits, or other heavy things weighing it down.

No, there was even less inside it than when he put his head in it. And yet it would not leave that table for all his coaxing.

"What's the matter, Brown? Losing your muscle?"

"Got a brick in your hat, and can't lift it?"

"I'd like to chastise somebody," growled Brown.

"Oh, please don't!" cried the three or four young fellows, pretending to get out of the way.



But what was the matter with the hat that Brown couldn't lift it?

It was glued fast to the table, merely this and nothing more.

Brown made divers and sundry remarks, and had to pry up the hat with a knife, leaving several tufts from the top adhering to the table.

Having rescued his hat he put it on, and then looked around for his over-shoes.

There they were, under the table, looking as frank and open as a pair of number ten golashes could look.

Brown put out his foot, and tried to push them toward him.

They weren't being pushed that evening, and they remained where he had found them.

Then he reached down, and essayed to lift them with his hand.

They didn't respond to his dainty touch any more than the hat had done.

"Got paralysis, eh, Brown, and can't lift your rubbers?"

"Maybe someone has put a ton of coal in 'em; they're big enough."

"Or taken 'em for boats, and put a chain on 'em."

Brown paid no attention to these flippant remarks, but examined the shoes more carefully.

They had been nailed to the floor.

"If I find out who has been playing these tricks I'll discharge him," he muttered, wrathfully.

"Walk home on your head, Brown, and then you won't get your feet wet."

"Go borrow a couple of dry goods boxes; they'll do as well."

"Anyhow, it won't hurt your feet to give them a bath once a year."

"Go to thundah!" growled Brown, as he went off to get a nail extractor and release his brogans.

When he returned the jokers had departed.

He got into his overshoes, put on his gloves and started off, the maddest dude in town.

When he reached his hash house there was another surprise in store for him.

His gloves had been lined with cobbler's wax, and he had a regular monkey and parrot time getting them off.

"It's all that Jack Ready's doings," he growled, "but he won't stay another day in the stoah. I'll have him discharged tomorrow."

However, he thought better of it the next day for, after all, he had no proof that Jack had played the racket on him.

He was politely distant to our young friend, and put on no more airs, and consequently Jack let up on him, though he was ready at any time to go on with the fun whenever Brown got obstreperous.

"Golly, I like to put dat fellah's head in a bucket ob tar," laughed Gloom. "Reckon he'd be stuck up 'nuff den, Marse Jack, don' yo' fink so?"

"Yes, or make him swallow a dozen pokers to take some of the stiffness out of him."

The next day, having a little racket on his mind, Jack got a chance to leave the store to do some business for Mr. Cotton, taking in his dinner hour before he returned.

Hurrying through with the business, he went around to the hotel where he had had the fun with the two old duffers the day before.

The piazza was deserted, and the empty arm-chairs stood in a row against the house.

This was just what Jack wanted, for if there had been even one person around his little plan would have been spoiled.

"I want you to help me, Gloom," he said, for of course, the little coon was along.

"All right, Marse Jack, I'se ready to do anyfing fo' yo'."

"Then take this cord and tie the legs of some of these chairs together."

"Close togeder, Marse Jack?" asked the young darky with a laugh.

"Not too close, just enough to allow them to move a little."

"All right, Marse Jack," and Gloom let off another snort.

"Hurry up, don't waste all your time in laughing."

Jack was already at work, and had tied the hind legs of two chairs together by the time Gloom got down to business.

However, the small-sized coon soon demonstrated that he could work when he wanted to, and those chairs were shackled to one another in short order.

When the job was finished, each chair being handcuffed to its respective neighbors, right and left, the boys got up and surveyed their work with satisfaction.

"Cheese it! The boarders are coming out!" whispered Jack.

"Jes' in time, Marse Jack, bress my heart if we isn't."

The boys then skipped to a respectful distance and waited for the show to eventuate.

First came those two pompous old ducks, Hawkins and Perkins,

gotten up for mashing purposes only, in cutaway coats, white vests, ruffled shirts, giddy trousers, and shiny slick hats.

Behind them came two or three other gentlemen, guests at the hotel, ready for a quiet smoke and a chat to help settle their dinner.

Perkins and Hawkins each grabbed a chair so as to place it in the most eligible position on the porch.

Both chairs objected to being taken to any great distance.

Both men thought that the other was interfering with his little arrangements.

"Let go of my chair, Pete Perkins. I had it first."

"Who's touching your old chair, Hank Hawkins. You've got mine, you old fossil!"

"Haven't, you mutton-headed old calf."

"Let go, you rattle-brained old turnip."

"Ain't touching your chair."

"Neither am I touching yours."

Then they looked at each other with fire and fury in their eyes.

However, they were both right in a measure.

Each had hold of a different chair, and there were two or three between the ones they had collared.

"Oh, excuse me."

"Pray don't mention it."

Then they started to collar on to the chairs again.

Just as they reached out their fat hands to grasp the prizes they suddenly glided away.

Two of the other boarders had coupled on to two other chairs, one on each end of the line.

They yanked them toward the piazza railing, and the other chairs followed suit.

Consequently when Peter Perkins went to put his hand on his chair it wasn't there.

In the same manner when Hank Hawkins tried to grab his chair, it suddenly took him a crack in the shins.

"Ow! Stop that!" he yelled, jumping half around.

Then the chair caught him in the calves, and down he sat plump in the middle of it.

"What are you doing?" cried the man on the east end.

His chair had suddenly evinced a disposition to stand still.

Just then Peter Perkins, seeing his chair moving away, sat down in it with elegance and alacrity.

"Hold up there, you've got my seat!" yelled the man on the west end of the row.

"Haven't either, you chump," said Perkins.

"Got my own, you fool!" added Hawkins.

Then another man came out and grabbed the middle chair in the row.

He did not give it any of your delicate yanks, but lifted it from the floor with a bounce, and hauled it toward him at full speed.

Perkins was just getting up to investigate matters.

Away went his chair from under him with cyclonic suddenness.

He sat down on the floor with force enough to shake the piazza.

"Ugh! What's that?"

"Give us these chairs!"

So said the men on the east and west ends of the row.

Then they connected to them and gave them a stout tug.

The middle man gave his chair another yank at the same instant.

In fact there hadn't been any time wasted in the whole transaction.

The result was that all those chairs were on the move at once.

Hawkins found himself bounced in two shakes of a mule's foot.

He struck the floor just in front of Perkins.

Then both old sports glared at each other like two wildcats.

"Pete Perkins, you're a fool!"

"Hank Hawkins, you're another!"

"Bah!"

The chairs were having a fine fracas of it at this moment.

Some had turned over backward and some the other way, while the rest seemed undecided what to do.

"Let go of those chairs!"

Each of the three men uttered these words simultaneously.

Then they got a good grip on their respective chairs and hauled away for dear life, each in a separate direction.

The two end men were too much for the middle man.

Their pulling straightened the line of chairs out, and he was yanked off his feet.

He fell over his chair and sent it sprawling on the floor.

The shock was too much for the cord which held the chair, and it broke in two places.

What was the result?

Mr. East and Mr. West suddenly found themselves pulling against nothing.

As a consequence they both went over backward with a suddenness that took their breath away.

Their own chairs and two or three more followed suit and piled on top of them.



There never was seen such a miscellaneous collection since the days of Noah and the ark.

Old duffers yelling and sputtering, chairs scraping and shuffling, two boys laughing and chuckling with delight.

Out came the landlord, clerk, head waiter and chief porter.

They attempted to straighten the chairs out and make things better.

They only succeeded in making them worse.

In two seconds all hands and the chairs were mixed up the worst way that ever was seen.

"Hoop-la!" cried Jack, "that's the best gag yet."

"Golly, ain't dat fun?" laughed Gloom. "Couldn't hab a bettah time if de house fell down."

## CHAPTER XII.

The scene on that hotel piazza was equal to a stampede of a whole circus, menagerie, troupe of riders, gilded chariot and all.

The way those chairs got mixed up with the men who came to straighten them out, was a caution to housekeepers.

Jack and Gloom took in the whole show from the sidewalk and thought it was immense.

It took some minutes to get the kinks out of that gang on the piazza, but at last the landlord caught on to what was the matter.

He got things to rights after that, but he was as mad as hops, and wanted to lick the fellow that had tied those chairs together.

Jack wasn't giving anything away on that score, however, as he wasn't aching for a licking.

He and Gloom made themselves less visible to the naked eye, however, in view of the fact that the boss was spoiling for a fight, and might possibly desire to take a round with them.

"My golly, dat am de bes' fun I'se had dis year, Marse Jack, 'clar' to glory if it amn't," observed Gloom, with an audible smile, as he and Jack disappeared around the corner.

"It wasn't such a bad snap after all," returned Jack, "though I can do better when I really try very hard."

"Golly! I fink it am good enough to take a medal."

Our two friends now went to their boarding house, which they reached a few minutes before dinner was ready.

Thereupon Jack slipped into the dining-room on the quiet, filled the salt-cellar with sugar, and the sugar bowls with salt, and then skipped out.

When the bell rang all the boarders came with a rush as though the house was on fire, all hands trying to be first at the table.

Mrs. Muggins, who ran a big dressmaking establishment, was first down, and at once called for a cup of tea.

When she got it she dumped in four heaping teaspoonfuls of salt and took a big swallow.

In the meantime Mr. Filkins, who sat opposite, had sprinkled his meat liberally with sugar without noticing the difference.

Suddenly, however, wild cries of despair were heard.

"Salt!" shrieked Muggins.

"Sugar!" howled Filkins.

"'Tisn't, it's salt!" yelled Muggins.

"Sugar, I tell you!" snapped Filkins.

"Taste it yourself, then."

"I guess I know sugar from salt."

"Well, you need salt anyhow, you're so fresh."

"And you're sour enough to need a ton of sugar."

"Salt, I tell you."

"Sugar, you pig-headed thing."

About this time the other boarders were beginning to make a fuss.

"It's a pity we can't have things right," snorted Miss Betsy Prigg, an old maid at the foot of the table.

"We pay enough, I'm sure," added Mr. Jonas Slim, a rising young lawyer, who was never known to pay his bills if he could dodge them.

"It's the worse place I ever saw," snarled Mrs. Topflight, who had been fired out of a dozen boarding houses for growling.

"It's a regular shame," put in a dapper little man, who never said anything till he saw how the tide was setting, and was consequently thought to be a person of great sense.

Just then the landlady, hearing the fuss, came in to know what it was all about.

"What's the trouble, ladies?" she asked.

"Salt for sugar," cried Muggins.

"'Tain't, it's sugar for salt," snapped Filkins.

"Salt!"

"Sugar!"

"Which is it?" cried the landlady in despair.

"Oh!" cried Muggins.

"Ah!" echoed Filkins.

Then Muggins grabbed Jack's salt-cellar and put half its contents in her mouth and to take the taste of salt out.

The result was not as she had expected.

She got more salt for Jack had been good to himself.

She sputtered and gagged and nearly had a fit.

"Ow! I shall want to drink water all the afternoon," she sighed.

"H'm! You ain't the one to waste a thirst like that on cold water," giggled Filkins. "It'll be bottled beer, I guess."

"Mr. Filkins, you're no gentleman."

"You're another!"

"I'm sure I don't know how the mistake came to be made," said the boss of the hash-shop. "I filled the salts and sugars myself this very morning."

"That accounts for it," said Filkins. "You never do get anything straight."

"As straight as your walk, Filkins, when you come home from the lodge," snickered Jonas Slim.

"It's positively disgraceful," sighed Betsy Prigg.

"So it is," said the dapper little man without an opinion.

"What is?" snapped Muggins.

"Yes, what is disgraceful?" questioned the hostess.

"I don't know," said the little man, who wanted to crawl into a crack and pull it in after him.

However, things were soon amicably arranged, although Muggins looked daggers at Filkins, and Betsy Prigg looked curling tongs at the little man, and Jonas Slim looked foolish all the rest of the dinner hour.

Nobody tumbled to the originator of the little joke, however, and everybody but the right one was blamed for it.

After dinner the boys went back to the store, and not far from it met a specimen of the genus Hebrew; class, dealer in old clothes; subdivision, sharp.

"Ca-ash paid for old clo'!" warbled the fellow, taking lots of time to the first part of the song, and clipping off the last as though talking against time.

"Cash paid for old clo'; any kind of old clo'!"

"There's a chance for you, Gloom," said Jack. "Go sell yourself in a lump to his nibs."

"Old clo'?" said the Jew catching sight of Jack's movements with his sharp little eyes, and rushing up to him.

"How much do you give?"

"Der highest brice, my shild. Off you wants to exchange, I gif you a nice Persian rug vat cost ten tollars at redail, or a bair off pronze vases for your shelluf, vat couldn't been imported for less as seven tollars und a halluf."

"Do you buy all sorts?"

"Ya, anydings von a linen duster to a sealskin obergcoat, efening dress suits or business clothes, und bay der highest brices mit anypody in der cidy."

"Do you see that store there?" asked Jack, pointing to the establishment where he and Gloom were at present employed.

"Ya, I see dot."

"Well, you go there, and ask for Mr. Brown, the head tramp of the place. He's got something to sell you."

"Ish dot so?"

"Cert; just you brace him."

"All righd, my shild."

Then the Jew hurried away, and Jack saw him enter the store. He and Gloom followed in a couple of minutes, and were just in time to see the fun.

"I vant to saw Mr. Prown, de headt tramp off dis blace," he said, in a loud voice.

The salesmen laughed, and one of them, pointing out the floor-walker, said:

"There is the gentleman you want."

"Goot-tay, Mr. Prown, I vas glat to see you vunte," said the Jew, most affably, as he paused in front of the astonished floor-walker.

The nobby Mr. Brown in his store clothes, boiled shirt, giddy scarf, vaseline bangs and waxed moustache, standing face to face with a dirty, slouchy Jew in faded, frayed garments and battered hat and carrying a bundle wrapped up in greasy ticking, made a combination rarely witnessed.

"You vant to make a pargain mit me dis mornin'?" asked the Jew, confidentially. "Vell, I gifes you der highest brice. I puyes the sood you hafe on and vill bay cash or exchange. Vat you say to tree tollars for dot?"

All hands were taking in the show and laughing over it, while Brown was mad and ashamed all in one.

"I have nothing to sell, fellah," he said in his most icy, petrifying, North-Pole tones.

"Oh, yes, you hafe, my tear," persisted the Jew, dropping into a confidential whisper, heard all over the place.

"No, sah, nothing whatevah!" retorted Brown.

"Off you don't vant to sell here, my tear, I gomes mit your poarding house dis efening," said the Jew, coaxingly, taking Brown by the buttonhole.

Then all hands laughed, and Brown looked nearly ready to faint.

"I gomes up und had a shmoke und a drink mit you, my tear,



und prings a frient vat vas a good shudge of diamonds off you vant to pay. You vas look immense mit tiamond studs, my shild."

"Fellah," said Brown, getting mad and shaking off his tormentor. "I desiah to have no dealings whatevah with you. There is the doah, sah!"

"Oh, you wants to shook me, ain't it?" cried the Jew, dropping his bundle. "You don't know me, h'm?"

"No, sah. Release my coat, sah."

"Den I knows you, Mr. Prown, my shild, petter as you know me," said the Jew, buttonholing Brown again. "How about dot vashed tiamond stud, dot you brought to my blace in der-Powery lashed year, und got fifteen tollars on, und it wasn't vorth fuffy cents?"

Brown colored and tried to shake the Jew off, but the latter wouldn't have it.

"I dinks you vas a honest man, Mr. Prown, und I nefer gleans dot shtud till after I gifes you der money und der dicket, but de next day I vashes him mit alcohol, und den he vas so plack lige a pebble mit der streed. You don't remember dot, hey, Mr. Prown?"

"I was not awaiah that the stone was washed," stammered Brown.

"You wouldn't be hurt to be washed yourself," muttered Jack, behind the Jew's back.

Now Jack considered himself pretty sharp, but that Sheeny was a shade more so.

He heard Jack's remark, whisked about in an instant, and said in knife-like tones:

"Ah, dere vas der leedle poy vat tolt me Mr. Prown, de boss dramp off de blace hat somdings to sell me, didn't you, my tear?"

"I?" said Jack, coloring. "No; you must be mistaken."

"Oh, no, my shild, I nefer make mistakes. It vas you vat tolt me dot."

Brown now had a chance to make his escape, and he improved his opportunity at once.

"I guess you saw my twin brother," said Jack, coldly. "We look just alike, and you can't tell us apart except by the color of our socks. Sometimes I am puzzled to know whether I am myself or my brother."

"Vas your twin brodder hafe a nigger friend to go around mit him, like yourselluf?" asked the Jew, catching sight of Gloon.

"Why, certainly, and the coons get mixed up, too, sometimes. I don't know now whether that's my moke or my brother's."

"Dot vas too tin, my shild. Vell, I vas glat you tolt me apout Prown, seeing dot he vas an old gustomer off mine, ain't it, Prown?"

Then the Jew turned, but Brown was nowhere to be seen, having hidden himself in the darkest part of the cellar.

"Vere vas he?" asked the Jew. "Ach! He run away vunce."

"Come, my friend, we don't want to buy anything to-day, so you had better go."

It was Mr. Cotton who spoke, and his manner plainly indicated that unless the old clo' man went of his own accord there would be found means to eject him.

"I vas sorry I could not sell you nodings, my tear sir, but maybe de leedle poy vould puy somdings off—"

But Jack had disappeared as suddenly as Brown himself, and even Gloon had departed.

The Sheeny picked up his bundle, and left the store greatly chagrined, as Mr. Cotton was saying:

"Those peddlers must not be allowed in here on any account. That fellow is a thief, and I had him arrested a year or so ago. That is why he slinks away so quick."

The Jew was gone, and the show was over, but Brown had to stand a laugh when he appeared half an hour afterward.

Then he remembered that the Jew had said that Jack had asked him in and that made him mad.

He put this with the other tricks that Jack had played on him, and complained to Mr. Cotton.

Other stories had reached this gentleman's ear, and the next morning he called Jack into his office and said:

"Ready, you have mistaken your vocation."

"Sir?" said Jack.

"You ought to be on the stage."

"Sir?"

"A store like this offers no incentives to a person of your talents." Jack knew what was coming now as plainly as though he had seen it written all over the wall.

"Then I am to understand—"

"We have no further need for your valuable services."

"Bounced," said Jack, laconically.

"I will therefore release you," went on Mr. Cotton. "The cashier will give you your money as you go out."

"Good-morning," said Jack, pleasantly. "Sorry to leave you, but we must practise self-denial sometimes."

Then he waltzed out as breezily as a March morning, leaving Mr. Cotton very much surprised.

"Well, that boy will make his way in the world if cheek will dot it."

Jack got his money of the cashier, put on his hat, said good-by to his friends, and started for the door.

"Whar yo' gwine, Marse Jack?" said Gloon, as Jack went to go out.

"Rolling again, Gloon. Good-by, old pard."

Gloon's eyes got as big as saucers in a moment.

"Am yo' gwine away, Marse Jack?"

"Yes, I'm on the roll. Good-by, old chum. Won't you shake hands?"

"No, sah! Ef yo' 's gwine away, I'se gwine, too."

"No, you mustn't do that. You have a good place here."

"Don' car' ef I hab. It amn't no good wifout you 'round."

"Oh, yes."

"No, sah, an' ef yo' goes, so does I, I tol' yo'."

Then he hurried to the back of the store, bounced into the office, and said, in a hurry:

"Boss, I discharge yo' dis minute. Gib me my money an' I'se gwine away jis as soon as I kin."

"I am perfectly satisfied with you, my boy," said Cotton, smiling, "and I had intended to have you at my house as a page and hall boy."

"Don' wan' de job. Marse Jack am de on'y fren' I've got, an' if yo' bounce him, den I bounce yo' de same time."

"Master Jack is too lively for this establishment, my young friend."

"Dat's its fault den, an' not Marse Jack's. I wouldn't stay in sech a slow place ef I was him, an' I'se gwine, too."

"Well, give this to the cashier and he will pay you what is due, though I am sorry to lose you."

"Dat am all taffy, boss," chuckled Gloon, taking the note the proprietor gave him. "Yo' isn't sorry a bit; yo'se glad."

Then he went to the cashier, got his money and his hat, and hurried out in search of Jack.

He found him waiting on the next block, for Jack knew well enough that nothing would induce that young coon to stop in the place after he had left.

"I 'scharged de boss, Marse Jack," said Gloon, with a broad grin, as he came up, "dough he wanted dreful bad to stay."

"Fired him out, eh?" laughed Jack.

"Yes'r, done gub him de gran' bounce, an' now I'se wif yo', whereber yo'se gwine."

"You're a good fellow, coony," said Jack, with something like a lump in his throat, as he grasped the honest, black hand of his little friend and pressed it warmly.

"Don' yo' go fur to do dat, Marse Jack," said Gloon, with a snifle, "less yo' want make me cry," and Gloon began to laugh so as to crowd out the tears.

"Well, we're off again, then," said Jack, merrily, "and don't care a penny for anyone but ourselves."

Two hours later a richly-dressed lady drove up to Cotton's in an elegant carriage, got out, entered the store and asked for the proprietor.

"Have you a young man in your employ by the name of Ready?" she asked.

"I had, madam, until this morning."

"Jack Ready, was he called?"

"Yes, madam, and as lively a young rascal as ever breathed."

"I saw him here about six weeks ago, and I knew then that he must be the person, and when I heard he was supposed to be in the city I knew it must be he that I saw."

Cotton did not know what to make of all this, and finally said:

"Do you want to see the young man, madam?"

"Yes," she answered quickly. "Will you send for him?"

"I might give you his address, for he is no longer in the store. He left this very morning, not three hours since."

"Oh, dear, how unfortunate."

Mr. Cotton rang his bell, called his cashier, and said:

"Mr. Greenwood, do you know Jack Ready's residence?"

"He boarded in a house somewhere on Nineteenth street near Second avenue, in a big boarding house, he and the darky, too."

"You don't know the number?"

"No, sir. I think Rogers, whom he assisted, found him the place."

Mr. Rogers was sent for, but, although he did not know the number of Jack's boarding house, offered to find it for the lady. She accepted his offer and took him in her carriage to the place. They found that Jack and Gloon had paid their board bills and had left, bound no one knew whither, not more than an hour previous.

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Rogers," said the lady, as the salesman gave his report. "I shall have to advertise now, I suppose."

"Jack hasn't done anything wrong, has he, ma'am?" asked Rogers.



"No, indeed, but I wish to find him. It will be greatly to his advantage."

What this was, however, the lady would not state, and Rogers was put down at the store door knowing no more than he had at first.

He remembered the lady as having looked fixedly at Jack the first day he was employed there, and remembered also that he had wondered at it then.

She drove away in her carriage after making him promise to send her any word of Jack that he might receive, giving him, however, the address of a firm of lawyers downtown instead of her own.

"I wonder what it's all about?" he mused. "If Jack had only stayed the week out now. It's all on account of that dude Brown. Won't the boys make him sick for getting Jack fired out, after this? Well, I should smile."

Meanwhile, Jack and Gloon, having left their hash house, were on the tramp downtown, taking in the sights.

They dined at a big restaurant, they took in a matinee, they walked in Central Park, and finally brought up in a cheap lodging house pretty well downtown.

Jack would have gone to a hotel, but they wouldn't take Gloon in, and so he gave the place the shake.

In the morning, he and Gloon arose late, took breakfast at a restaurant, and then started off in search of fun and a job.

Striking toward the river they took a side street, and presently saw something going on ahead of them.

Two street boys were turning handsprings for the amusement of the crowd.

It was in front of a grocery kept by a fat, good-natured Dutchman, who evidently did a wholesale as well as retail trade, the sidewalk being occupied with hogsheds, boxes and barrels.

"I'll give you a show that'll beat this," said Jack, pushing his way through the crowd.

"Vat sort of chow vas you got vunce?" asked the Dutchman.

"The original dancing moke, jubilee shouter and big-mouthed comedian, Mr. Peter Gloon. Get up there, cooney, and show them what you can do."

"Wha' yo' want me to do, Marse Jack?" asked Gloon, joining his chum inside the circle.

"Give 'em a breakdown."

"Whar I gub it, hey?"

"Get up on that molasses hogshhead, and shake her down. There's room enough for you."

"Golly! Yo' specs I climb way up dere? Neber reach it in de worl'."

"I puds you ub once, off you dance for de crowd," said the Dutchman.

Then he lifted the little nig on top of the hogshhead, and the spectators gathered about.

Jack sat on a box and patted while Gloon danced.

The crowd applauded, for they saw that the young moke had lots of fun in him.

"Give us a song," they cried.

"Wait till I gubs yo' de rest ob de dance," cried Gloon.

Then he danced away for dear life, fetching those big feet of his down with a thump, and putting in the most fantastic steps he knew.

"That's boss!" cried the lookers on.

"I bade you dot vas der besd dancing I efer see since I leaf Chermany," cried the Dutchman.

"Keep it up, Gloon," said Jack, laughing. "You're doing first rate."

"Yas'r, I keep it up all day, 'less suffin' bust," cried Gloon, opening his big mouth and planting those beetle crushers of his with great force and noise on the head of the cask.

He felt as proud as a star ballet dancer when she gets a bouquet, and would not have called the president his cousin at that moment.

However, pride sometimes gets a knock down, and vanity is the mother of misfortune, as the proverb says.

### CHAPTER XIII.

The young moke proved the truth of the old saying.

Now that cask was made to hold molasses, not to be used as a dancing platform for little niggers.

Besides that, it had traveled and seen better days, and was far beyond its prime.

Bang!

Crash!

Slump!

The head of that cask getting tired of supporting Gloon, refused to support itself.

It caved in with a sound like dropping over-ripe tomatoes on a sidewalk.

It went in all at once, and Gloon took a sweet tumble right into the middle of six barrels, more or less, of molasses.

In he went up to his ears, and got more taffy in the rough than he had ever thought existed.

When he got in he couldn't get out, but could only gasp and sputter.

If he had gone in six inches deeper the sticky stuff would have smothered him.

"Fo' de Lor' sakes!" he gasped, and then he tried to get out.

The heavy molasses stuck to him and held him down, and his feet felt as heavy as underdone biscuits.

It slopped over the top, ran down the sides of the cask, and attracted the flies for a mile around.

"Sudden disappearance of a boy, the latest illustration!" cried Jack.

"Ach, dot vosn't West India molasses. I couldn't had nigger boys in dot," cried the Dutchman.

"Bust open the cask and let him out."

"Turn it over and dig him loose."

"Get a derrick and hoist him up."

Those who did not offer suggestions took it out in laughing, and there was a most hilarious time.

"Hold on once!" cried the Dutchman. "I don't could had dot molasses vasted. I gets him owit, I chow you."

Then he rushed inside, got a broom, stood on a box, reached down, stuck the broom between Gloon's suspenders and shirt and hoisted him up.

He yanked him out of that molasses till his hands were above the top of the cask, and then held him up for folks to look at.

"Let him drain off, Dutchy."

"Don't he look sweet?"

"Just like a stick of candy."

"Or a hunk of molasses cake."

"Mein gracious! I vas vaste me all dot molasses I dinks. Catch 'em in a parrel somebody."

As Gloon hung suspended from the broom by his braces, he presented a most comical as well as melancholy appearance.

The molasses ran off of him in streams, his face was all stuck up, and his mouth had evidently been fastened open so that he couldn't shut it.

The bystanders roared and clapped their hands, thinking it the funniest thing they had ever seen.

Two of the actors in that little farce thought it anything but funny.

These were Gloon and the Dutchman.

"Ach! Dere vas fifty kwarts of molasses gone to vaste mit dot nigger mans."

"Bress de Lawd, Marse Jack, how I get 'em off eber, h'm?"

"Ach! I vas had to hang him ober der parrel und let him train."

"Lemme down, Marse Dutchman; dem suspenders am chokin' me."

At this everybody laughed, the Dutchman alone excepted.

He got mad and tried to hoist Gloon further out of the molasses. Gloon's weight was too much for the broom, and it broke in two.

However, the little coon was lucky enough to fall outside of the cask this time.

He alighted on the ground and picked himself up as quickly as might be.

His shoes were full of molasses, and at every step the sweet stuff squirted out above his ankles.

"Lor' sakes! Wha' yo' s'pose I do now?" he asked, very much disgusted.

"Guess you'll have to be boiled out."

"Roll him out and make taffy of him."

"Put him in a feather bed and make a bird of him."

Thus suggested the funny fellows in the crowd.

"G'long wif youse!" said Gloon, disgusted.

As he walked the molasses dripped off his clothes and left a sweet trail behind him.

The street boys scooped it up with their fingers, dogs licked it, and one big brute of a hound with a sweet tooth began to lick Gloon himself.

"G'way dar!" yelled the little darky, giving the dog a kick and covering his nose with molasses.

"Better go and wash yourself," said Jack, laughing at Gloon's woebegone expression.

"Whar de goodness I get watah 'nuff to wash off all dis 'lasses, Marse Jack?"

"Oh, I guess there's enough in the river."



"Goodness sakes, I'se boun' to sink ef I jump into de riber now wif all dese heaby t'ings on."

Jack could not suggest anything for laughing, and Gloom dragged himself along, the maddest coon in the city.

"Reckon yo' got suffin' else to do 'sides makin' fun ob a po' fellah," he muttered. "Why don' yo' do suffin'? Hahn't yo' got no sense 'tall?"

"Well, you are a sweet one, and no mistake," laughed Jack.

"How I get dese t'ings off?" asked Gloom. "Yo' got my coat?"

"Oh, yes, that's all right," laughed Jack.

He had taken charge of it when Gloom began to dance, and now had it under his arm.

"What I gwine to do, I ax yo', wif all dese t'ings cobered wif 'lasses?"

"Go take a wash."

"G'long wif youse. Who yo' s'pose lemme in all drippin' like dis?"

Jack had led the way toward the river, however, and he now came to a dock at the side of which were some vessels unloading.

"Fo' Gawge, dere am de riber," cried Gloom. "Reckon I take some of de 'lasses off, anyhow."

Then he made a bolt for the end of the dock, tripped over the stringer and went headfirst into the water.

He had not intended to go in so soon, and with all his clothes on, but people do not always do what they intend.

He soon came up, puffing and blowing, but with considerably less on than when he went in.

"Too bad to waste all that molasses," laughed Jack.

"Hallo, young feller, what are you doing down this part of town?"

Jack turned round upon being thus accosted, and beheld his old friend, Captain Baggs, of the brick schooner, whom he had met in Harlem.

"Glad to see you, Captain Baggs. Where is your vessel?"

"There she lies over yonder. Got a load of boards on her this time. Still in the city, eh?"

"Oh, yes, and I guess I'll stick to it."

"That's right. But where's the nigger?"

"There he is," and Jack pointed to Gloom, who was just climbing up on to the dock.

"Wal, I'll be swamped!" and Captain Baggs laughed a regular down-east, hearty laugh at sight of Gloom. "What in time you been doing to him now?"

Jack told the captain all about the adventure with the cask of molasses.

"Wal, I'll be durned!"

And Baggs laughed again and again, and seemed inclined never to quit.

"That does beat all!" he said at last. "But I say, he'd better go below and take off his wet things an' have 'em dried."

"Wha' fo' yo' laff, Marse Cap'n?" asked Gloom. "S'pose yo' fink it funny, don' yo'?"

"Go below, take off your clothes, and have them dried," laughed Jack.

"H'm! Dat am de same wessel whar I slep' afo' up in Ha'lem, an' whar my close got away up on top ob de ship."

"I don't think that will happen again," said the captain.

"Wal, Marse Jack, I dunno whar else I kin go, kase I'se shiberin' wif de col'. Specs I kin go to bed while dem closes is a dryin'."

"Oh, certainly."

"Don't you get into my bunk, though."

Then Jack and the captain helped the unfortunate coon to go below and take off his sticky clothes and shoes.

"Gosh! You could bill them things down for West Injy molasses even now," laughed the captain. "Being black an' muddy lookin' wouldn't hurt it."

"Guess I'd better buy him some new ones at a second-hand store," said Jack. "A week's boiling wouldn't take the stickiness out of these things."

"Wall, you've had your fun and I guess it's wuth what the clothes would cost."

"But the best part of it is, that I didn't put the job up on him," laughed Jack. "It all happened naturally enough."

"Yes, but I guess you wasn't sorry," said the captain, with a grin.

"Not a bit," said Jack, with an answering wink.

Having gotten out of his clothes and between a pair of warm blankets the young coon lost no time in dropping off to sleep, his bath having made him somewhat drowsy.

Before he awoke Jack had gone and purchased a new pair of trousers, a shirt and vest, shoes and an undershirt, and put them on a chair beside his bunk.

The old things were put to soak in a pail of hot water, Jack having given them to the cook to make what use he could of them.

At last, after a comfortable snooze, Gloom awoke, sat on the edge of his bunk and looked around him.

"Marse Jack!" he called.

"Well?" said Jack, coming into the cabin.

"Whar am my close?"

"Don't you see them on the chair?"

"Dem ain't my duds."

"What's the reason?"

"Cause dey ain't."

"Who told you so?"

"Wal, de jacket am mine, but de weskit an' de trouserloons 'longs to some oder feller."

"Try 'em on and see."

Gloom put himself inside the things and surveyed himself with great satisfaction.

"Dey looks berry fine, Marse Jack, but I don' tol' yo' dey isn't mine."

"They're where you left them."

"Yas'r, but dey ain't dirty, an' dey hahn't got 'lasses all ober 'em."

Jack laughed, and then said:

"You don't suppose they could be washed, do you?"

"Yas'r; but it don' make striped trouserloons brack to wash 'em, do it?"

"Don't it?" asked Jack, innocently.

"No, sah; an' it don' make a white shirt blue, eider, nor a brack weskit brown. Dem amn't my duds 'tall, I tol' yo'."

"Yes, they are, for I bought them for you myself."

Then that juvenile moke took a decided tumble.

"Yq' don' buy 'em fo' me while I'se snoozin'?"

"Yes."

"Well, ef dat don' beat all."

"Don't you like 'em?"

"'Cose I does, on'y I fought I war takin' some oder feller's close. Marse Jack, yo' am de bes' boy in de worl'."

"Oh, no, I guess not."

"Yas'r, I tol' yo' so, an' yo' bettah b'leve it."

"Not long ago you said I was the worst."

"Sho! I war on'y jes' funnin'."

And Gloom grinned, shook with mirth, and finally let out a laugh that made the windows rattle.

"What's the matter here?" asked the captain, coming down the steps.

"Oh, nothing," laughed Jack, "except that the coon is so proud of his new suit that he can't hold in."

"Wall, he just looks boss. I'd never knowed him afore, ef you hadn't ha' been with him."

"Well, Gloom, I guess we'd better go now," said Jack. "It's growing late."

"No, sir; you're going to stay aboard the schooner to-night and have a good time," protested Baggs. "Supper is most ready, and after that we'll have some fun."

Jack felt like declining the worthy captain's hospitality, but the man was so pressing in his invitation that there was no refusing.

He and Gloom stayed to supper, therefore, and in the evening they had some music, Jack sang, Gloom danced, the captain spun yarns and they had the jolliest time ever known.

They turned in quite late, and Jack was so tired that he never thought to play any rackets off on Gloom, and both slept till late the next morning.

Then, as it was Sunday, the captain insisted that they must stay all day with him, go around the city, see the sights and return to the schooner at night.

In the afternoon they all went to Central Park, the day being quite warm and pleasant, though the foliage was not yet greatly under way.

Strolling along a quiet path, Jack presently espied a lone, lorn tramp, sitting on a bench fast asleep.

His hat was pulled down over his eyes, his arms were folded across his chest, and a tomato can stood beside him on the bench.

His clothes were patched and darned till you could not tell what had been the original color, his boots were beyond redemption and he had no shirt or other linen to speak of.

His nose was red, his cheeks were blue, he had a week's beard on his face, and he hadn't been washed for a month, to all appearances.

And yet, unlively though he was, he sat there snoozing the snooze of the just and the innocent as it might be, though it probably was the sleep that succeeds a long-continued diet of stale beer and free-lunch cheese.

Anyhow, he was asleep and sound asleep, too, for the spunky little sparrows whisked all around and over him and he did not mind it a farthing's worth.

"Look at the ancient mariner," laughed Jack, pointing to the tired wayfarer.

"Sho! He ain't no sailor," said the captain, who hadn't read anything outside of the newspapers and the nautical almanac, and had never heard of Coleridge.

"Suppose we give him a bounce," continued Jack.



"Bress yo' heart, Marse Jack," said Gloon, "yo' 'member de oder tramp what we bounce?"

"Of course I do."

"How yo' fix dis one? De sam eway?"

"No."

"How den?"

"You get hold of one end of the bench and I'll take the other."

"Yas'r, an' wha' den?"

"Over she goes."

"Yah—yah, dat be bully fun!"

"Well, I'll be durned," said the captain.

He wasn't the sort of fellow to interfere with sport, however, even if he did not take a hand in it.

The two boys went behind the bench where the tramp was sweetly stumbling and each grasped an end.

There was nobody in sight, and consequently they were not liable to be disturbed.

"Wha' yo' say, Marse Jack?" whispered Gloon. "Wha' yo' say to frowin' him over back'ards?"

"No, we might break his neck."

"A'right, say when you'se ready."

"Ready!"

Gloon grabbed hold of the top rail of the bench with one hand and the middle one with the other.

He was ready to split with laughter even in anticipation of the fun to be had, but he held in like a major.

"Go!"

At the word he did his level best, and, with Jack's assistance, over went that bench in a jiffy.

The tramp was fired out of it, and sat down in the middle of the walk in a brace of shakes.

His can rolled after him, and went skurrying down the path on its own hook.

Jack and Gloon righted the bench, and then dodged behind some bushes close at hand.

They weren't going to miss the fun for a good deal.

The sudden bouncing of the tramp from the bench to the hard gravel walk knocked his nap endwise.

He suddenly found himself lying in the middle of the path, without having the slightest idea how he had got there.

"Change cars!" he muttered, as he sat up and looked around.

"How the deuce did I get here? Thought I was settin' on a bench th' last time I knowed anything."

Then he picked himself up, rubbed his head, put his hat on, secured his can and began to cogitate.

"Guess I must ha' slipped off in my sleep. Ain't nobody round 'cept that old sailor feller down the walk."

Jack and Gloon were out of sight, taking in all the show.

"H'm! Guess I'll try another whack at it," muttered the tramp. "Ain't likely to slip off again in a hurry, I reckon."

He settled himself well back on the seat, pulled his hat over his eyes, folded his arms across his ragged breast, and prepared for another snooze.

He was pretty good at that sort of thing, and in a few minutes the boys heard him snoring.

"Let's try him again," whispered Jack.

"Same kin' as befo'?" asked Gloon.

"No, we'll try the back action way this time, I guess it's safe enough."

"Golly! Dat be bully fun to see dat ol' tramp go flyin' froo de air like a bird. I gib a dollah to see him."

"Cheese it, Gloon, don't laugh," cautioned Jack.

"I'se still as a oyster, Marse Jack."

"Now then, take hold and when I give the word, let her go."

"Bet yo' life."

Then those jolly boys grabbed the back of the bench and Jack gave the word.

The manoeuver was executed to the taste of the queen herself.

There was a vision of flying arms and legs as that tramp shot through the air and landed in the bushes.

There was a crash of breaking branches, several muttered grunts, numerous quite vivid expressions, and then a heavy fall.

It was comical enough to see him go bolting through the air as the bench suddenly went from under him, but not at all funny to hear his remarks.

He flew about ten feet, and landed all in a heap on a clump of thorn bushes, which had no regard whatever for the thinness of his garments.

The spikes went clean through his dilapidated clothing.

The boys concluded not to remain too near the seat of war, and betook themselves to a safe distance.

The tramp picked himself out of the bushes, rubbed his smarting limbs, looked all around, and then remarked:

"Well, I'll be cussed! If Sunday is a day of rest, why the deuce can't they let a feller alone, and not go working trick benches on him when he wants to take a nap?"

"Them park benches always was good places to snooze in, but the

coppers wouldn't let you do it if they could help it, and now they've got to puttin' a burglar alarm on 'em, and the parks won't be no better than the streets.

"Ah, I'm disgusted with ye!" he continued, apostrophizing the bench. "Yer look mighty innercent, but yer an old fraud. Take that, and see if you'll fool anyone else."

Then he let fly with one of his big feet, and in a moment the bench lay bottom upward on the walk.

Now there was a newcomer just entering upon the scene whom the tramp had failed to notice as he stood saying hard things to the bench.

This was a big, muscular park policeman, who rounded a curve in the path just as the indignant tramp kicked the bench over.

"An' phat air yez doin' that fur, ye haythen vagabond?" he cried, hurrying up. "Isn't it bad enough for sich scallawags as ye to sit upon the binches and fill 'em up with I won't say what, unless ye can call it a foreign population, that ye must nades go to kickin' thim over afther and schrape all the paint aff 'em?"

"What d'ye say?" asked the tramp, turning about. "Oh, you're a copper, eh?"

"Yis, I am, an' I want to know the rayson ye have fur kicking the binch over like that."

"'Cause it's a trick bench, and when you've been sitting on it a while it flops forward or back and gives ye the bounce."

"More power to it, then, begob! The man that'll invint anything to bounce tramps, and kape thim out av the parks, is a public binefactor and desaves a medal, a monnymment, a free funeral whin he dies, which he may niver do as long as he lives, God bless him!"

"Ah, go take a walk; you make me sick," growled the tramp, starting off.

"Here—come back here! Ain't yez goin' to pick up the binch?" cried the cop.

"Pick it up yerself, old Beeswax."

"Begob, I wondher if what he said about the binch was throe?" muttered the officer, examining the piece of furniture in question. "Sure, it's jest like anny av the binches in the park," he muttered, as he set it on its feet. "There's no thrick at all about it."

Then he looked at it again, looked all around to see that no one was looking, and finally sat down.

"Begob, it's a hard job I have thrampin' up and down the parks all day," he said to himself, meditatively, as he leaned his elbows on his knees. "There's nobody around, that's wan comfort, and I don't see phwy I shouldn't take a bit av recreation. It's little enough pay I get for all the wurruk I do."

Now Jack had heard the conversation between the tramp and the cop, and realized that there was more fun yet to be had out of that bench.

"Let's bounce the copper," he whispered to Gloon. "Easy now, and don't make any more noise than possible."

"Pwhat bechune lukin' out for thramps and kapin' the byes from stealin' the flowers and warnin' off mashers, it's plenty of wurruk we poor officers has to do, annyway."

He was bending forward now, intent on his meditations and oblivious to all around him.

"Phwat harrum is it, thin, I'd like to know, if a man sits down now and thin on the binches? Faix, the thramps shouldn't have the full benefit av thim."

The boys had stolen up cautiously and noiselessly, and were now right beind him.

"Sure, I'm thinkin' that if there war sich an invintion as phwat that dirthy vagabond av a thramp was tellin' about, it 'ud be a mighty foine thing to give the bounce—"

At that moment he got the bounce himself, and went sprawling out on the walk, the back of the bench planking his dicer down over his eyes.

When he scrambled to his feet the bench was in its proper place, and no one was to be seen.

"Begorra, the thramp was roight," he muttered, "and I've been cot in the thrap meself! Faix, it's a beautiful invintion, but its great fault is that it can't discriminate!"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

When the boys had bounced the meditative copper, they concluded very wisely that it would not be safe to remain longer in that vicinity.

"Gorramighty! him go ober jes' as slick as de tramp, didn't he?" laughed Gloon, when he and Jack had left.

"Yes, but our friend won't recommend the bouncer on account of its not being able to discriminate between a tramp and a policeman," laughed Jack.

"H'm! we don' car' which it am, does us, Marse Jack, so long as we hab some fun?"

"Not a bit. We'd bounce a millionaire as soon as we would a beggar, if we had the chance."

The boys soon caught up to the skipper who had walked ahead,



and when they told him all about the bouncer, he nearly went into a spasm.

"You boys do beat all," he remarked, when he had caught his breath. "If laughing makes a feller grow fat, I think I'd weigh about three hundred if I lived with you two fellers fur about six months."

"Well, we'd try to make things pleasant for you," said Jack, giving Gloom a poke in the ribs.

"Yas'r, we make fings hum ef we jis' try once," added Gloom, with a snort and a chuckle.

"Reckon you would," assented Captain Baggs.

After strolling around an hour or so longer they all returned to the vessel, where they spent the evening very pleasantly.

The next morning Jack declared that he must no longer be a burden upon the captain, but that he and Gloom must look for a job.

"If you care to go to sea," said Baggs, "I'll be sailin' for Savannah in a few days, and I'll take ye 'long."

"No, thanks, I think we'd better remain in New York."

"Dis place am good nuff fo' us," said Gloom, "dough we'se jes as much obliged to yo' fo' makin' de offah."

"Wall, when I come back, just look me up, won't ye, and come down and have some fun."

"Oh, certainly."

The boys had breakfast on the vessel, and then started out to see the city and look for a job.

There didn't seem to be much chance of getting the latter down, though there was plenty to be seen.

At last, along in the afternoon, Jack suddenly remembered that he had had nothing to eat since morning.

"Are you hungry, Gloom?" he asked.

"Specs I is, Marse Jack. Reckon I could eat a hoss and caht!"

"Why didn't yau mention it before?"

"Why, yo'm de boss, an' I fink p'raps you'se fastin' to-day."

"Well, let's have something to eat now."

"I'se got no 'jections 'tall, Marse Jack."

Then they hunted up a restaurant, went in, ordered their dinner, and sat waiting till it should be ready.

Jack picked up a newspaper lying on the table, and began to read the news.

Presently in opening the sheet to get at the inside his eye caught the following:

"JACK READY—If in the city please call at the office of Coke & Blackstone, Littleton Building, Nassau street, and learn something greatly to your advantage."

To say that Jack was surprised would have been putting it very mild.

He was dumfounded.

"I say, old man, read that," he said, passing the paper over to Gloom with his thumb marking the notice.

"Am it suffin' very interestin', Marse Jack?"

"I should say it was."

"Wall, yo' know I neber read when I'se hungry. It am bad fo' de tumnick."

"Oh, I guess you can read this."

"Don't like to broke my rule, Marse Jack."

"Oh, yes, go ahead."

"Kean't yo' read it to me?"

"No; read it yourself."

Gloom took the paper, glanced at it very wisely, and then said:

"Yas'r, dat am bery interestin', but it am no news to me."

"Oh, it isn't, eh?" said Jack.

"No, sah."

"Well, if you knew my name was in the paper, why didn't you tell me?"

"Cause it ain't true, Marse Jack, an' de fellah knows it. I swar to de judge it wasn't you 'tall what upsot de p'liceman."

Jack took a big tumble and let off a hearty laugh.

"Why, you little black humbug, you can't read at all," he cried.

"Who said I could?" returned the coon, indignantly.

"Why, you said you never read before dinner."

"No mo' I does. Nor any oder time. Yah—yah, I fool yo' dat time, Marse Jack. Wha' time yo' specs I hab to spen' on readin' when I hab to wo'k so hard, h'm?"

"Well, my name is in the paper."

"Don't say nuffin' bad 'bout yo', do it?"

"No; only somebody wants me."

"Tain't de policeman?"

"Oh, no; it's a lawyer."

"Den it's de policeman wha' got de liars to put de piece in de papah."

"No. I guess my folks are trying to find me."

"Am' yo' los', Marse Jack?" asked Gloom, opening his eyes very wide.

"No, but you may know that I don't know my father and mother."

"Neider do I, Marse Jack. Does yo' specs folks am gwin' to ax whar I is?"

Just then the waiter brought the orders, and the boys fell to with a relish.

"I think I'll call down there after dinner and see what there is in this thing," said Jack, presently, when the edge had been taken off his appetite.

"S'pose yo' fin' yo' fader an' moder, wha' yo' do den, Marse Jack?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"Yo' won' car' to 'sociate wif a po' col'd boy den, I s'pose?"

"Don't you fret about that," said Jack, heartily.

"Specs I bettah fin' my own fader an' moder, den," chuckled Gloom, "ef I eber had any."

"Well, if you don't I'll be both to you, old fellow."

"Lor' sakes, will yo', Marse Jack?" And Gloom opened his eyes so wide you couldn't see anything else.

"Of course."

"Why, dat am fus' rate."

After finishing their meal the boys started downtown, and, after a little inquiring, Jack found the building where the lawyers had their offices.

It was another thing, however, to find the lawyers themselves, for the place was a regular nest of these gentry.

Jack studied the directory down at the door, but men kept hurrying in and out, and as fast as he began to hunt he was jostled and pushed aside, and had to begin all over again.

Then the thing was so big that he could not see the names at the top, and had to stoop to see those below.

"The firm isn't in this building at all," he muttered, after looking all over the directory twice.

Then he looked again, and found that only the upper stories were given.

"Wonder whether the others are not occupied?" he mused.

"Noder sign-bode ober dere, Marse Jack," said Gloom, pointing to the opposite side of the vestibule.

Jack turned and saw the other half of the directory on the other side.

Then he had as much trouble as before in reading the names.

"Get out of the way," blustered one fat, bald-headed fellow, stumbling against Jack.

"No peddlers allowed in this building," said another.

"Who do you want to see?" said a man with a pail and broom.

"Coke & Blackstone, lawyers," said Jack.

"Fourth story, rear," said the man.

"Fourth story? Thanks."

Then they began climbing upstairs, and had reached the fourth story, as they supposed, and began hunting for their men.

They did not find them, however, but in their search they came upon the elevator.

"H'm! we might have taken that, if we had thought," muttered Jack, "and saved ourselves all this trouble."

Then, as the car came along, Jack stopped it and asked the man inside where Coke & Blackstone had their office.

"Fourth floor, rear."

"Isn't this the fourth?"

"No, third."

"Why, it's the fourth from the bottom."

"Well, the bottom is the basement, and after that is the first."

"Oh, then, you don't call the first story the first in New York."

But the man had no time to answer such knotty problems as this, and the car went down.

However, Jack went up another flight, and at last, after wandering around in a perfect maze of halls, passageways and corridors, found the office he wanted.

When he entered he found himself in an outer room, where an office boy was skylarking with a type-writer girl, and paying no attention to Jack.

"Is this Coke & Blackstone's office?" asked Jack.

"Yeah," said the boy.

"Can I see them?"

"What do you want?"

"I have private business with them."

"Well, you got to tell me your name fust," said the boy doggedly.

"Tell them Jack Ready wishes to see them."

"Any hurry?" asked the boy. "I guess they're busy just now."

"No. You two can go right on flirting," chuckled Jack.

At this the type-writer girl disappeared into another room, and just then a bell was heard from an inner office, separated by a glass partition from the other.

The boy hurried off and presently returned, saying very respectfully:

"Mr. Coke will see you at once."

Jack went in, leaving Gloom in the outer office, and found a pleasant-looking man sitting at a table piled up with books and papers.

"Well?" said the gentleman.

"I am Jack Ready, whom you advertised for this morning."

"Yes, and for three mornings past. Why haven't you been here before?"

"I did not see the notice till to-day, and then only by accident."

"Take a seat. Now, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"What do you wish to know?" asked Jack, taking a seat.

"You say your name is Jack Ready?"

"Yes."

"Where were you born and how old are you?"

"I am about eighteen, I believe. I don't know where I was born, but I was left on a farmer's doorstep when very young."

"Who was the farmer?"

"A man named Skinner, living in Connecticut."

"How long were you there?"

"Till last summer, when I left and started for New York."

"Did you come on direct?"

"No. I went from place to place. First I worked for a man named Hunter, then for another named White, and for several others."

"You seem to have changed your place quite often?"

"Yes, I was a regular Rolling Stone."

"How long have you been in the city?"



"Six or seven weeks."

"Employed here?"

"Yes, at a big dry goods store uptown, kept by a Mr. Cotton."

"H'm!" said the lawyer.

"I have some of the things that were left with me when I was found on Skinner's doorstep," said Jack, producing his little packet of keepsakes. "Would you like to see them?"

"Yes."

Jack opened the bundle, and the lawyer examined the contents very critically.

"There is no longer any doubt," he said, at length. "Your story corresponds exactly with what we have already learned. Your mother has been making strenuous efforts to find you."

"My mother?" cried Jack. "Then my father—"

"Has been dead for many years."

"Where does my mother live?"

"Uptown. I will go there with you at once, for I know that she will be anxious to hear the latest news I can give her. I knew you were the right one as soon as I saw you."

"Why did you ask me so many questions, then?" asked Jack.

"Professional caution," said the other, with a smile. "I have already had a score of young fellows calling on me, all insisting that they were the original Jack Ready, but all of them impostors."

"They didn't know as much as I do about myself?"

"No, but they fought hard, some of them, to prove that they were entitled to a fortune."

"When did you first begin the search for me?"

"About six weeks ago. At that time your mother saw you in the store uptown, and was very much impressed with your face."

"Why, yes, I remember now."

"At this time, too, she received a letter from a man in a hospital, requesting her to call on him and hear his story before he died."

"Yes?"

"This man had stolen you when a mere child in order to be avenged upon your mother for some fancied wrong she had done him."

"It sounds like a story," said Jack.

"Now that he was dying," continued the lawyer, "he wished to repair the injury he had done."

"He told how you had been left on the farmer's doorstep and all about your life at the farm, for he had seen you there at different times since then."

"I went up to Skinner's to inquire about you, and found that you had started for New York. I traced you part of the way, but then lost all trace of you."

"Your mother called at Cotton's again, remembering that she had seen you there, and made inquiries."

"You had just left the store, and also your boarding house, and we were off the track again."

"Just missed me," said Jack. "I only left there last week."

"Then we advertised, and for several days, as I have said, till finally I was afraid you had gone off to sea and that I would never find you."

"Then is my name Jack Ready?"

"No, it is Jack Redmond, or John Redmond, more properly speaking. Skinner gave you the name of Ready."

"Do you think he knew who I was?"

"No, for if he had he would have claimed the reward that was offered for you long ago. He thought that you were a nobody, and, as you were a great help to him on the farm, hung on to you till you ran away."

"Let us go and see my mother," said Jack, eagerly.

"We will go at once," said the lawyer.

When he had put on his hat and coat he passed into the outer office with Jack, and was going right ahead, when Jack said:

"Wait a moment, sir. This is a friend of mine."

"Hab yo' foun' yo' fader an' moder, Marse Jack?" asked Gloom, who had been patiently waiting all this time.

"Did you think I was never coming?"

"Wal, I s'pected yo' war having a pretty long hunt fo' dem, Marse Jack. Wondah ef I could fin' a fader an' moder in a liar's office?"

"You might look," laughed Jack, "though I don't think they keep an assortment of such things in lawyers' offices."

"Don' dey really, Marse Jack? How yo' come to fin' yourn dere den?"

"I didn't; I only heard about them here."

"Does dey know anyfing 'bout mine, does yo' spec?"

"You might ask," said Jack, with a grin.

"If we can't find a father and mother for your friend," said the lawyer, "we may be able to find him a good position, if you want him near you."

"Isn't I yo' wally, Marse Jack?" asked Gloom.

"Of course."

"Well, den, I guess yo' needs me mo' now dan eber befo', 'cause yo'se gwine to put on mo' style, I specs."

"Yes, he must live in style now," assented the lawyer, "because his mother is very rich."

"Golly, spec's my moder ain't bery rich," muttered Gloom, "dough I don' see why I shouldn' hab one, long as Marse Jack hab find one."

The party now left the building and took a carriage for uptown, arriving at Mrs. Redmond's elegant residence on Fifth avenue in half an hour or so.

When the lawyer rang the bell he was admitted by a liveried servant, who took his card and requested him to await in the reception room.

Jack looked with great interest at the evidences of wealth all

about him, finding the house more elegant than anything he had ever seen.

In a few minutes an elderly, very handsome lady came into the room, and Jack at once recognized her as the one who had looked so fixedly at him in the dry goods store when he first went there.

He saw at a glance that the lady greatly resembled him, and knew now, beyond a doubt, that he had found the mother from whom he had been so long separated.

The lady looked at Jack, smiled, and going directly to him, took his hand and said:

"My dear boy, I have found you at last. I knew there could be no doubt about it."

"Mother!" cried Jack, but he could say no more, his emotions choking his utterance.

"There does not seem to be anything that I can do," said the lawyer, drily, after a few moments, during which Jack and his mother were tenderly embracing each other.

"Yas'r, yo' kin fin' a moder fo' dis chile," said Gloom. "I guess I don' ear' to be a orphin any mo' now dat Marse Jack hab foun' him moder, an' yo' kin jes' hunt me up one right away."

The lawyer laughed, and Jack, turning to Gloom, said:

"Never mind, old fellow; we are not going to send you away. You shall be my own footman and valet. Shan't he, mother dear?"

"Of course, my dear Jack, since you wish it. I am so overjoyed at finding you again that I cannot deny you anything."

Jack then told his story of his life at Farmer Skinner's, of his wanderings, and of his seeing the advertisement for him quite by accident.

Gloom was made more important than ever by having shared Jack's fortune, and the little coon was elated way up to the top-most heaven of delight when Jack's mother turned to him and said:

"My young friend, you have proved yourself faithful to my son in the days of his adversity, and now that he is prosperous you shall not be forgotten. Consider yourself as his own personal companion and assistant."

"Clar' to goodness, missis, I'se so glad I don't know what to do," said Gloom. "Ef yo' don' let me holler I shall hab to go outdo' an' let off steam. Glory hallelujarum! I feels jes' as happy as a spring chicken, 'clar' to goodness I does."

"Do all the shouting you want, old chap," said Jack, with a laugh.

Then that little coon danced a breakdown, cried, laughed and giggled all at once and finally sobered down with the remark:

"Wal, I allus said dat Marse Jack war de bes' boy in de worl', an' ef he's foun' his moder an' is rich an' all dat, it jes' done serbe him right."

There is very little more to be told, and then we can ring down the curtain on Jack Ready and his adventures.

Jack's mother was very wealthy, and now that she had found her son there wasn't a happier woman in all New York.

A great many plans were thought of and talked over, for Jack's benefit, but the boy settled them all by deciding that he would go to school, finish his education and then enter business.

Gloom was given a position as page with Jack's mother, and he looked smart enough in his nobby suit of blue with brass buttons all the way down his padded breast, broad collar, white dicier and saucy-looking top-boots.

"Guess dis chile fell on him feet when he struck Marse Jack on de road to New York," he would often say. "Golly, de han' ob Providence war in it fo' shuah."

It was decided that Jack would not go to school until the fall, and that meantime he must make new acquaintances and get used to his changed life.

He was dressed as became the son of the rich Mrs. Redmond, and looked handsomer than ever in his new clothes.

He would go out for a drive nearly every day, with Gloom sitting solemnly on the box beside the coachman ready to attend to his slightest wants.

One day as he was ready to go out his mother came to the door to wish him God speed.

It was an interesting group. Jack and Gloom on either side of the door, and Mrs. Redmond standing just within.

Somebody that Jack knew came by at that moment and Jack tipped his hat.

Gloom did the same, as in duty bound, and Mrs. Redmond smiled.

That is the last we see of them, standing in the doorway, and now we can say good-by to them, as we seem to hear Jack sing softly:

"The life of a stroller may seem very fine,

In the natural course of events.

But I don't want any more in mine,

In the natural course of events.

There may be some gain, but there's plenty of loss,

There's a few grains of gold to a mountain of dross,

And I'm sure that a rolling stone gathers no moss,

In the natural course of events.

THE END.

Read "SHORTY JUNIOR; OR, THE SON OF HIS DAD," by Peter Pad, which will be the next number (45) of "Snaps."

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